

T.L.S. subscriptions

The surest, most convenient way to get the TLS each week is to take out a subscription. Our new subscription service now located at the address below will provide all subscribers quickly and regularly with their weekly copy of the paper, which remains an incomparable guide to new and recent books published all over the world. New subscribers are invited to begin here, by filling in the coupon below.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The following postal zones are listed for your convenience. If your country is not included, please contact your local postal authority to ascertain your correct zone as specified by the British Post Office.

United Kingdom only by surface mail.
6 months (26 issues) £12.50
12 months (52 issues) £25.00.

British Postal Zone 'A' including Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
6 months (26 issues) £23.40.
12 months (52 issues) £46.80.

British Postal Zone 'B' including Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
6 months (26 issues) £26.52.
12 months (52 issues) £53.04.

British Postal Zone 'C' including Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan.
6 months (26 issues) £29.12.
12 months (52 issues) £58.24.

Europe including Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta.
6 months (26 issues) £20.80.
12 months (52 issues) £41.60.

By Air Freight: USA and Canada only
£35.00 - \$70.00 (US dollars only) per annum.

Please send me *The Times Literary Supplement*

☐ 6 months ☐ 12 months

Please print

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

I enclose my cheque for made payable to Times Newspapers Ltd.

Signature.....

Date.....

Return this coupon to Times Newspapers Ltd, Supplements Subscription Manager, Oakfield House, 55 Perryman Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 5DH.

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

DECEMBER 11 1981

contents

JOHN BAYLEY LACHLAN MACKINNON	Edward Mendelson: Early Auden Donald Wainwright: Send My Love to Rats - A Study of Religious Experience in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins	1431-32
JACQUES BERQUE M. E. YAPP	Ernest Gellner: Muslim Society V. S. Naipaul: Among the Believers	1433
PATRICIA CRAIG DAVID NOKES RICHARD BROWN	Fiction Pendar O'Donnell: The Knife James Stephens: Desire and Other Stories Peter Costello: Leopold Bloom - A Biography	1434
EUGEN WEBER ALAN RYAN	John J. Macaloon: This Great Symbol - Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games David McLellan (Editor): Karl Marx - Interviews and Recollections	1435
PATRICK COLLINSON	Richard L. Greaves: Society and Religion in Elizabethan England Information, please	1436
ROBERT BROWNING MALCOLM SCHOFIELD	Arnold Toynbee: The Greeks and Their Heritage M. R. Wright (Editor): Empedocles - The Extant Fragments	1437
GEORGE PARFITT PETER EARLE	Richard S. Peterson: Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson F. Bastian: Defoe's Early Life	1438
ROBERT CONQUEST	George Leggett: The Cheka - Lenin's Secret Police	1439
OSWYN MURRAY PAUL DRIVER PETER CONRAD ERIC KORN FRANCES SPALDING CHRISTOPHER WHITE ALAN BOLD	Commentary The Orestes (National Theatre) The Orestes music Alceste (Covent Garden) 84 Charing Cross Road (Ambassadors Theatre) British Sculpture: Part 2 (Whitechapel Gallery) Jacob Van Ruisdael (Mauritshuis, The Hague) Andrina (BBC TV) Among this week's contributors	1440-42
	To the editor	1443
BRUCE BOUCHER	John McAndrew: Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance Deborah Howard: The Architectural History of Venice Pierre Amiet and others: Art in the Ancient World	1444
JOHN MCMANNERS NORMAN HAMPTON	Maarten Uites: The Abbey of St. Germain des Prés in the Seventeenth Century Robert Butler Choleau - Volume I: Father and Son, 1719-1754	1445
A. S. BYATT PETER KEMP	V. S. Pritchett (Editor): The Oxford Book of Short Stories Maurice Charney: Sexual Fiction	1446
A. W. B. SIMPSON RAANAN GILLOM MICHAEL HOFMANN	Nell MacCormick: H. L. A. Hart Clifford Grobstein: From Chance to Purpose - An Appraisal of External Human Fertilization Myopia in Rupert Brooke Country (Poem)	1447
CAROL RUMENS MICHAEL HOFMANN VIRGINIA LLEWELLYN SMITH DAVID PROFUMO	Fiction Colleen McCullough: An Indecent Obsession Winifred Wolfe: Josie's Way Angela Carter and others: Sex and Sensibility Writing Women Les Jordan: Cat's Eyes	1448
AIDAN DAY JOHN BATCHELOR OLEN CAVALIERO	A Tennyson discovery (article) C. H. Salter: Good Little Thomas Hardy Stephen Pickett (Editor): The Romantics	1449
OM BRACK	Eighteenth-Century British Books: An Author's Union Catalogue: extracted from the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books, the Catalogue of the Bodleian Library and of the University Library, Cambridge by F. J. G. Robinson, G. Averley, D. R. Eastmont and P. J. Wallis Eighteenth-Century British Books: A Subject Catalogue: extracted from the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books by G. Averley, A. Flowers, F. J. G. Robinson, E. A. Robinson, R. V. and P. J. Wallis Basil Hunslett: Steel-engraved Book Illustration in England	1450
GEOFFREY NAYLOR		
ANTHONY CONRAN GREVILLE LINDOP	Aquarium: Number 11 - In Honour of Hugh MacDiarmid P. R. Scott & A. G. Davis: The Age of MacDiarmid Ann Edwards: Routledge: Thistle and Rose Patric Dickinson: Winter Hostages Geoffrey Gifford: Twists of the Way John Fuller: The January Divan	1451

LITERATURE

The flight of the disenchanter

By John Bayley

EDWARD MENDELSON:
Early Auden
407pp. Faber. £10.
0 371 11193 9

Both Humphrey Carpenter in his recent biography and now Edward Mendelson in this very illuminating critical study emphasize the vulnerability of the younger Auden, and perhaps the Auden of any age. A secure childhood, but accompanied by a sense of failure and inadequacy at school and in relation to others; a fear of appearing dull and anxious and uncouth, compensated for by making himself the legendary figure who seems to understand everyone and everything - "Hunt the lion, climb the peak, / No one guesses you are weak" - this dualism is commonplace among the gifted of all ages, particularly the gifted young. Most such persons, though, have a secure place, a secret wholeness of self-satisfaction into which they can withdraw. We can detect it, even enter it to our own corresponding satisfaction, in the poems of Edward Thomas, of Hardy, of Eliot. But not in Auden's. He is not even on terms of intimacy with the "Wound" to which he writes the letter.

The act of working - and Auden became a workaholic as well as a heavy drinker - obscures most effectively the question of who one is. "The soul doubtless is immortal where a soul can be discerned." The poem's immortality, in Auden's case, does not depend on the survival in it of a self. It is interesting that he instinctively sought one, at the time of his juvenilia, in the poems of Hardy and Edward Thomas, twin voices to be imitated. A special favourite was one of Thomas's most characteristic poems, "Landscape": "I have come to the borders of sleep

The tall forest towers;
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf;
In silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

The poet's desire to get lost in sleep reveals his actual presence in the poem more subtly and strongly than anything else could do, as it does in Philip Larkin's poem with the repeated line: "Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs". Those negations disclose an individuality as nothing in Auden does. His sort of equivalent would be to write, as he does in "Oxford", "Here too the knowledge of death / Is a consuming love" - and the tone of that could be paraphrased from a guidebook or a work of psychology.

"All I have is a voice", he wrote, in his early work, and his potency depended on its impersonal authority. Charles Madge's reaction - "There waited for me in the summer morning, / Auden, fiercely, I read, shuddered and knew" - was common among those at the time who understood the nature of new utterance in poetry and were unconsciously awaiting it. That it was not the voice of an individual was, in terms of the Zeitgeist, so much the better: a bleak impersonal severity was in fashion, as was the idea of communal enterprise, in poetry as in society. But Auden never did develop his individuality. The cosy mannerisms of his later period are no more personal than the youthful tones, but are just as much something in the air, the sound of the leader of a group or fashion, though no longer one that was minatory and exhilarating.

Not infrequently it happens that the tone was not altered at all between the early and the late periods. As soon as the undergraduate of 1920 was introduced by his friend Tom Driberg to *The Waste Land* he took to writing stanzas like

In spring we waited, Prince felt
Through darkness for awakened guests:
The lichen lower weighed himself

At stations on august machines

which has not only ceased to be Eliot and become Auden but is the same Auden - although not as accomplished - as the one who around 1950 was to write for Cyril Connolly that most plummy of camp poems, "The Fall of Rome."

Fantastic grow the evening gowns;
Agents of the Fie pursue
Absconding tax-defaulters through
The sewers of provincial towns.

The always questionable relation between self and group is characteristic of this poetry, the sign of a

radonix that is other poets who have, as it were, found themselves in their poetry take their dedication to it for granted: their art is for them the most important human activity, proclaiming poet as man and man as poet, paired in harmony. Gabriel Josipovici blames Auden for his attitude to art, rightly seeing in it a rejection of the slow, painful exploratory process which results in the organic creation of a Mallarmé, a Joyce, an Eliot, a Wallace Stevens or a Montale. Auden's act was that of a scold or court poet, lead man in a team, the analogy again being with

into its moods and dreams, its fears and neuroses, its fashions and crazes, from Homer Lane to Sheldon, from the yo-yo to the carbon date. He turned into hard magic everything in the consciousness of the time that was questioning and uncertain, muddled and apprehensive, everything that was reaching out, as the poetry itself seemed to be doing, for new devices and solutions, new images of wholeness and salvation.

Poetry eternalizes these things, but also embodies in the process the very weakness it transforms, its "flat ephemeral" nature. Poetry only survives "in the valley of its making". That marvellous poem "Spain", which chastened liberals disapprove of today, gets its power from its accurate conjuration of the illusions of a special moment, its fidelity to that moment's sense of "Today, the struggle", and tomorrow (which never comes in poem or history) the idyllic social utopia. Auden, as he told Isherwood, knew they could only live among lunatics, and the same is true of his poems. Unlike most great poetry they do not beckon to another world but make one out of the absurdities of the present.

Of course if that had been the poet's intention the magic would not have worked: the young Auden wrestled with real problems as other intellectuals were doing. Mendelson is not only his most perceptive critic but executor, guardian and scholar-chief of Auden studies, and this study tells us more than any other about the background of his early work and the scaffolding of ideas behind his poetry, particularly of the big stuff, ambitious raids on significance like *The Orators* and *The Ascend of F.B.* Mendelson's tone is humorous and humane, and he never tries to impose a paraphrase of an interpretation, but he is up against the problem that all Auden critics face. Since his art was not evolved and explored but magical and ephemeral, Auden's poems lose their point in the focus of commentary, just as they frequently did when he himself revised them at a much later date ("Oxford" lost everything when its syntax was made more plausible). I recall the sensible and humanitarian glosses made by Richard Hoggart in his early study, and my own feeling when I was working on Auden that they were in a frustrating way both true and not true; that one could neither take the poems as magic anecdotes and incantations nor as (what for instance "Just as his dream foretold" or "Our hunting fathers" seemed to be) coherent meditations on social and personal states.



George Platt Lynes's photograph of Auden in 1949, the frontispiece to Howard Griffin's *Conversations with Auden* (see note overleaf for details).

modern activities like physics or filmmaking. For such an act, art must be highly decorated but untrustworthy, halcyon but bogus, beautifully made to be true to nothing else. Auden is the "half-witted Swedish deckhand" whom Basil Wright and Harry Watt, the directors of *Night Mail*, saw scribbling "the most beautiful verse" for them on an old GPO table and telling them to "just roll it up and throw it away" when its profuseness had to be checked. *Night Mail* is the strongest magic ever brewed by Auden, a magic that completely enchants and disposes what it celebrates.

The brilliant creature who looks like a Swedish deckhand is also an image of the Mozart who, so affronted the serious Sallier, a legend dramatized with elegant intensity by Pushkin and vulgarized in the play *Amadeus*. Artists dedicated as he for themselves recognize such genius but secretly, almost unconsciously, hate and envy it for it discredits their labours to bring their own special gifts to fruition. "Negative capability" takes on a special meaning in Auden's case. He comes as close as any poet, in the post-romantic age to what Coleridge said of Shakespeare: "a very Power of the fire and flood" - namely and inhabiting people and things, entering into being, while having no being of his own. In our time this primary activity of the naive poet is no longer possible, Auden could not get into things and people, but he got instead into the parts and sense of the age,

Then, ready, start your rumour, soft
But horrifying in its capacity to disgust
Which, spreading magnified, shall come
To be
A polar peril, a prodigious alarm.
Scattering the people, as torn-up paper
Rags and utensils in a sudden gust.

1981

Some books to remember from The Bodley Head

FICTION

Muriel Spark
Loitering with Intent
0 870 80900 8 £8.50

William Trevor
Beyond the Pale
0 870 30442 X £8.95

Vladimir Volkoff
The Turn-around
0 870 30323 7 £8.95

Alexander Zinoviev
The Radiant Future
0 870 30212 2 £7.50

Allan Massie
The Death of Men
0 870 30388 3 £8.50

Zemindar
Valerie Fitzgerald
0 870 30429 2 £8.95

GENERAL

Shaw's Music
The complete musical criticism
Edited by Dan H. Laurence

In three volumes 0 870 30247 8
0 870 30249 4 0 870 30248 6
£15.00 each

The Art of Maurice Sendak
Selma G. Lanes
Illustrated in colour and black and white
0 870 30388 5 £25.00

Walter Lippmann and the American Century
Ronald Steel
Illustrated 0 870 30378 8 £8.95

Battleship Bismark
A Survivor's Story
Baron Burkard von Müllenheim-Rechberg
Illustrated 0 870 80890 3 £7.95

Seized with immeasurable neurotic dread.

As the Airman would say: "Much more research needed into the crucial problem - group organization." Mendelson feels that energy like this is "a projection of the Airman's (Auden's) contradictory desire for order and no order at once." But where do we find Auden at all in such a poem? Granted his near-obsession with organization and meaning, and with the importance, which he often stressed, of a subject, the fact remains that the personality and behaviour of the Airman exist only as a secret excitement or glee. In "Consider" it seems likely that the rumour "horribly in its capacity to disgust" is in fact connected with homosexuality, and the secret group knowledge that goes with it. But this again is a case of Auden's talent for disappearing not only into the overwhelming atmosphere of the poem but into the general sense of apprehension and impending disaster ("It is later than you think") which the poem has conjured up.

The ideal Auden poem of this date always moves outwardly into a public scene imagined in its significant details and observed as if from the air or by radio ("Supplied elsewhere to farmers and their dogs / Sitting in kitchens in the stormy fens"). The torn-up paper is reminiscent of the famous shot in *Things to Come*, where the camera focuses on a ragged scrap of newspaper caught on wire, giving news of ultimate war horrors. The image of the helmeted airman, with his lordly perspective, is superb but farcical, too, just as his exhortation is also a spell of comfort against the horrors that a demoralized society imagines are awaiting it. Auden's poetry is deeply aware that the group want both to be thrilled by their hard and to joke with him, and that the ideal shaman is both a power and a figure of fun. The Airman is related to the curious persona of "Mother" which Auden adopted socially in his late maturity, when in addition to the role defined in "Your mother knows best" he would present mother as a clown figure, reciting the first line of Spenser's poem as "Your old mother thinks continually of them that are truly great". Reading Benedict and Malinowski, the young Auden was no doubt well aware of the function of this kind of thing in group anthropology: the fear of mothers or bears was negated by the shaman taking on their role.

Mendelson quotes a letter written in 1932 in which Auden revealed the source of *The Orators*, probably with a touch of parody of Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land*:

The genesis of the book was a paper written by an anthropologist friend of mine about ritual epilepsy among the Trobriand Islanders, linking it up with the flying powers of witches, sexual abnormalities etc.

The friend was John Layard, who had shot himself through the head in Berlin two years before, out of jealousy over a boy Auden was also interested in. Amazingly he failed to kill himself as he hoped to. Auden, after which he made a full recovery. Despite his depressions and instability he was a remarkable theorist and original thinker, and the papers he wrote for the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* - "Flying Tricksters, Ghosts, Gods and Epileptics", and "Shamanism; an Analysis Based on the Flying Tricksters of Malakula" - are the specific influences behind *The Orators*, mixed with the doctrines of D. H. Lawrence and the personality of T. E. Lawrence, and with the image of a revolutionary hero that came from Lenin and the early romance of Nazism and *Fuehrerprinzip*.

Together with the phrase *And on Both Sides*, *The Orators*, developed the Auden technique later adopted in the plays he wrote with Isherwood: exotic and mythical matter from the past and present and transported into the group life of English schools and homes. Such a transposition was standard practice among the modernists - Eliot had used it in *The Waste Land* - but Auden gave it not only the special emphasis of a group among initiates but a corresponding and disarming frivolity, (though *And on Both Sides* is significantly more serious, and more moving, than *The Orators*). As usual there is a discrepancy, particularly grotesque in the latter case, between the image of

the work of art and what the artist and his critics have said about it. Auden wrote to Naomi Mitchison that "the theme was the failure of the romantic conception of personality"; and expressing dissatisfaction to another correspondent he said the result was "far too obscure and equivocal" - what was intended as a critique of the Fascist outlook might be interpreted as a favourable position. That indeed, is one reason why *The Orators* comes off as well as it does, for Mendelson emphasizes that however much the early Auden wanted to respond "positively" to the challenge of the time and become the young poet spokesman for enlightenment and left-wing ideals, his art would not oblige. The group was essential to it, the cause was not. And neither was the Message. However much he tinkered with *The Ascent of F6*, the end remained a muddle, though the individual speeches and poems are as effective; and compared with its group liveliness the satire of *The Dog Beneath the Skin* operates on the most elementary level.

The most significant comment on *The Orators* was made by Auden himself in a preface to a new edition in 1966. He cannot, he says, "think myself back into the frame of mind in which I wrote it. My name on the title page seems a pseudonym for someone else, someone talented but near the border of sanity, who might well in a year or two become a Nazi." Its central theme, he then felt, was hero-worship, but had he ever been a hero-worshiper? Had he in fact, before he went to America and fell in love with Chester Kallman, ever been anybody, except a brilliant and dispossessed talent? The later Auden does not recognize the earlier, just as the writer of the early poems seems wholly different from the anxious and wretched being of his *Journal* and *Diaries*. Keats is Keats in letters as in poems, but Auden is not Auden. No wonder his early work and his manifestos to friends are so obsessed with "wholeness"; and it is highly ironic that Madge, and other readers ("My states of mind were broken. It was untrue / The easy doctrine, which separated things") should have been so struck by the force of the new doctrine. Mendelson comments: "Madge had it backward. Auden implied connections and relations only to announce their absence or failure."

It is rather, perhaps, that Auden's early poetry is always having the opposite effect to the one proclaimed, delighting when it threatens, reassuring when it warns; relaxing when it sets out to trace, No wonder Lewis, the apostle of true wholeness, was so disillusioned.

With great acuteness, Mendelson traces the wholeness of the problem to an early essay called "Writing" which Auden did for Naomi Mitchison, who was editing a collection called *An Outline for Boys and Girls and Their Parents*. Written in a simple family style, it discusses the connection of words with isolation and self-consciousness. In trying to bridge a gulf and restore wholeness, language in fact connives at the disjunction it tries to overcome. A hunting group learns to talk when it tries to retrace the communal excitement of the hunt (was Auden recalling Tolstoy's theory of art, here?) but words are naturally antagonistic both to user and referent. In reconstituting experience they separate us from it and from the wholeness we seek to attain. Mendelson suggests that Auden's account of language's origin in a sense of absence, its ineffectual efforts to bridge a gap, comes close to structuring theory "a generation before Heredia and Lacan", although the poet's schoolroom style in the essay (the furthest possible remove from the quality of later theoretical giants: Be that as it may, the piece certainly sheds light on the way Auden's diction gets its characteristic effects, and the gap his poems make between subject and response, a gap that becomes actually an aesthetic weapon. Mendelson's note for what is relevant to unlikely places: critics, he says, have written off this essay because of the book it came out in - is typical of the sensitive and deplorable relationship he brings to this period of Auden's life.

One might add that the even more effective weapon with which the poet's early audience and critics

the alienation of language is what might be termed the Saving Personalization. Direct appeals fail: it seems merely out of place when at the end of that ambitious poem "The Malverns" Auden invokes the words of Wilfred Owen and Katherine Mansfield ("Kathy in her Journal") to rub the message home; as out of place as when in 1929 ("It was Easter as I walked in the public gardens") he introduces us to an actual drop-out on a bench. It is true that "The Malverns" is a superlatively absorbing poem, and also the first poem in which Auden's settled maturity is forecast, with its caressing verbal catalogues and its simplistic ingenuities of appeal. It humanizes the helmeted airman and introduces us for the first time to that totally unmitigated intimacy which from now on will be the tone of a poet "assuming to sound like this," as he does in the Byron pastiche in *Letters from Iceland*.

The reader's feeling of intimacy with most poets takes two forms. First, that the poet is revealing to him, quite naturally and by the act of composition, something he could not reveal to anyone else; second, and conversely, that the poet is touching our hearts by revealing his own, as Hardy put it, also reveals that he has a self to keep back. The second does not apply to later confessional poetry, like Lowell's and Berryman's, whose convention is a complete avowal to the reader; and neither applies to Auden. His early intimacy of threats and promises is like the disclosures of an older and dazzling schoolboy prodigy to the reader as younger child; and this changes to the reader being accepted as one of a group of comrades and initiates, the poet forthcoming and unbuttoned but retaining his powers of fascination and omniscience. The poems written in Brussels in 1938-39, "Musée des Beaux Arts", "Care du Midi", "The Capital" and "Epiphany on a Tyrant" are good examples of this, and the success of such a style of communication reveals the holiness, embarrassment even, when the group seems to have disappeared, and the poet of "Lay your sleeping head" and "I sit in one of the dyes / On Fifty-Second Street" is talking to us on our own. The residue of discomfort and unreality in such poems is produced by a suggestion of contrived aloneness, a person-to-person relation does not come naturally.

It is here that the Saving Personalization comes to the rescue. These feats have an air of the unintentional, of inadvertence, of something the poet does not bother about and the reader can carry away with him.

And, gentle, do not care to know; Where Poland draws her eastern bow, What violence is done, Nor ask what doubtful acts allow Our freedom in this English house Our pieces in the sun.

The simple reference to Poland holds considerable complexity. Poland under Pilsudski is a tyrant appropriately named. But the bow is also that of violin and musician, the vulnerable instrument of peace, while the pictorial referent in the personification is Rembrandt's Polish Rider, the taut and soldierly masculine figure with the features of a girl, more generically, Poland plays the part in history of both victim and rebel. The beauty of the image seems serenely independent of the pushy insistence of the poet as leader and lecturer. It is the same with the green heraldic blimp of English landscape that Auden lifted from Anthony Collet's *The Changing Face of England*.

Calm at this moment the Dutch sea so shallow That sunk St Paul's would ever show its still from Norway. Perhaps the plunge into what seems a limpid imagination is the effect of true secrecy, not elsewhere found in Auden, the poet concealing his simple debt in Eliot's remembered dictum that "the bad poet imitates the good poet's style". I think that John Fuller, the doyen in England of Auden's minutiae, has also pointed out Auden's extraordinary debt to Collet's handbook, whose barely altered phrases none the less suffer a sea-change, calming and stabilizing the compositional alchemy. All the personifications do that.

As Fubrecht in an odd corner of great

Celsius' kingdom Might mumble of the summer measured once by him.

- this might be borrowed too, but the effect of all Auden's borrowing - whether of phrases, ideas, or doctrines - is to emphasize the immense spread and richness of his achievement, and the retreat, too, by personification into a kind of shyness.

To find those clearings where the shy humillations Gambol on sunny afternoons, the water-hole to which The scarred rogue sorrow comes quietly in the small hours.

The most pellucid and complete of all such things in Auden's poetry is probably the madrigal "O lurcher-loving collier", set to music by Benjamin Britten, which Auden wrote to ornament the last moments of *Coal Face*, a short documentary film about mining.

Everything that the young Auden wrote has a bottom of good sense. His poetry's hospitality towards crazes of every kind, crackpot or otherwise, carries into its art one of the most universal of human tendencies, and corrects it with a faith and a scepticism that, again as with most human beings, are almost identical. "You cannot have poetry unless you have a certain amount of faith in something, but faith is never unalloyed with doubts." A true magic is its own antidote. For Auden as for Nabokov, "art is a game of intricate enchantment and deception", but Auden also wrote that "in so far as poetry, or any of the arts, can be said to have an ulterior purpose, it is, by telling the truth, to disenchant and disintoxicate". It was by his genius for resolving this paradox that Auden became, as Mendelson justly claims, "the most inclusive poet of the twentieth century, its most technically skilled, and its most truthful".

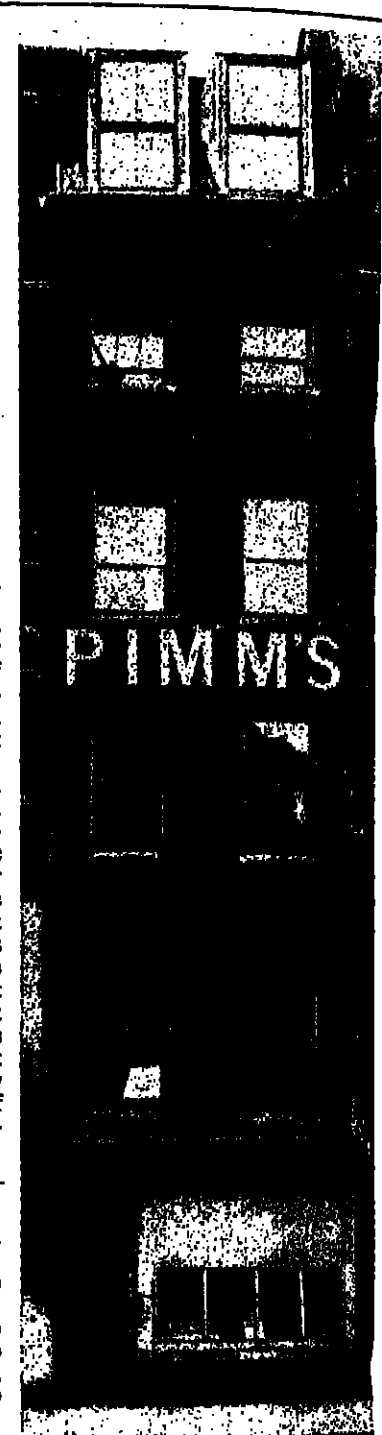
Howard Griffin's *Conversations with Auden* (200pp, Grey Fox Press, Box 31411, San Francisco, CA 94131, \$12.95; paperback, \$3.95, 0 912516 33 0) are the edited versions of eight dialogues that took place in the late 1940s after Griffin, then thirty-one and beginning his career as a poet, offered his services as a secretary to the thirty-nine year old Auden. All eight pieces were originally published in magazines between 1949 and 1953, but appear here for the first time in book form. The subjects - society, morality and art, psychoanalysis, history and religious belief - and the tone of the conversations may be familiar to readers of Auden's prose; the dominant preoccupation is with Shakespeare, and there are rich, lively and penetrating discussions of, particularly, *Antony and Cleopatra*. There are, of course, many flashes of a lighter aphoristic brilliance. Griffin: "What would you give as an example of a good society?" Auden: "A Jani section. There the number of instruments and the improvisation element are important."

Out of the cage

By Lachlan Mackinnon

DONALD WALHOUT: Send My Roots Rain. A Study of Religious Experience in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 203pp. Ohio University Press. £9.60. 0 6214 0565 9

This unusual book, written by a philosopher, sets out to describe and analyse a common form of religious experience, exemplified by that of Hopkins. The experience is that of the committed believer who feels frustrated or trapped in his spiritual or worldly life, suffering what the author calls "engagement" who responds by the discipline of "naturalism", an attention to the good things, human and natural, of the given world; but who is finally restored to well-being by the operation of grace. Hopkins offers a "phenomenological" (written with no particular philosophical accent) of the process. It is considered that Hopkins is fuller on the first two phases than on the third, but we are assured that



Victorian lettering on the facade forms a piquant contrast to the half-boarded windows of the Blitz era in this 1946 photograph of Pimm's Restaurant in the Poultry, London. Opened as a City chop-house in 1870, Pimm's (which gave its name to a drink served on its premises) was an unpretentious ripple in the great wave of restaurant and hotel building that struck London during the last nineteenth century. The illustration is from *Predella Bonifazi's* *Hotels and Restaurants 1830 to the present day* (Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England/HMSO. About 80 unnumbered pages. Paperback, £4.95. 0 11 700993 8).

their logic implies it. (We are reminded that "references to God are widespread in Hopkins.") A Protestant with ecumenical impulses, Donald Walhout keeps drifting away from Hopkins's Jesuit individuality, but in dealing with the generalized experience he is admirably sympathetic and humane.

Unfortunately, Walhout's prose is tellingly flawed: "I have claimed that the poetry of Hopkins exhibits a certain phenomenological structure, a certain phenomenology of religious experience. That this phenomenology is so is a feature of the poetry itself and is independent of whether Hopkins himself experienced it or whether the audience experiences it", he concludes in his last and especially one who speaks of "phenomenology, should know that whether anything is so is a moot point of being experienced is his own experience which has made it so for him, and he finds throughout the Hopkins and he wants and intends to find, remaining serenely undisturbed by the specific and personal peculiarities of the poet's writing as he is, apparently, by those of his own.

ERNEST GELLNER: Muslim Society. 267pp. Cambridge University Press. £18.50. 0 521 22160 9

"Orientalists are at home with texts. Anthropologists are at home in villages," writes Ernest Gellner; although, if the anthropologist is to be fully at home, we should add tribes to villages. What are we to make, however, of a society, or rather that group of societies which, for convenience sake, we call Muslim - in which the Text par excellence, the Koran, or else oral reminiscences of it, or at the very least references to it, is to be found at the very heart of both villages and tribes? Here I fear that the approach "from above" that of Professor Gellner's Orientalist, and the approach "from below" of the anthropologist, are both equally out of place. The first strives, like the majority of Islamic scholars themselves, to cover reality with an ideal grid which obscures shifting complexities. The second plunges into the undergrowth of actual diversity and risks losing sight of the very thing in which these societies find their own explanation, or rather the demanding model of their ideal final state, that is to say Islam. Indeed, their life is ordered - or disordered - in a perpetual debate between their principle and their reality, and any study of them which neglects one of these two terms will lack either realism or intelligibility - by which I mean an intelligibility conceived in the same mode as the subject itself.

It is true that the researcher can easily leave out the people whom he is studying. Such, indeed, is the price of most academic success. It is no less true that Muslim life does not consist, as the ulama would like it to, of a simple, more or less rigorous, more or less corrupt, application of the Koran. Such an application is merely an academic postulate, and the way in which actual societies depart from it describes supremely well the object of all anthropology. But to speak of departures is to speak also of movement, of paths followed or abandoned, of a model that can be referred to and of the realities which exceed or contradict it; it is to enter into the social and cultural history of Islam.

This was not Gellner's objective, however. One soon sees on which side he stands in terms of the two kinds of specialist I described at the outset. In a book full of appeals to Max Weber and Durkheim, and owing allegiance to Hume, not to mention Freud, d'Holbach and Marx, one is somewhat surprised not to find any discussion, despite the first word of the title, of the arguments of Louis Massignon, H. A. R. Gibb, A. J. Arberry, R. A. Nicholson, G. von Grunbaum and others of our generation or recent predecessors. The Koran appears neither in the index of book-titles nor of subjects dealt with. The reasons for this pretention will become apparent when I assess its consequences.

Morocco occupies a large place in Gellner's book-work in that country, all the more fruitful in that Morocco as society counts among the French, least adulterated in the Muslim world. Yet Berber societies are more revealing of the fundamental structures of the Maghreb than enlightenment about an Islamic system as such. The defining characteristics of this latter should perhaps be looked for rather among the classic Bedouin (in fact, a very extensive type), in the first, behind which by a revolution, after all, Sheikh Abdou and Sheikh Ben Bedia, go no - and have yet perhaps to speak their final word, in conjunction with the upsurge of the bourgeoisie.

The typology of the towns, illustrated notably by the ulama, tends to impose itself on that of the tribes, contrary to it, is concerned with social historical analysis, though I would be the last to complain about that. It

The popular and the purified

By Jacques Berque

through. I shall leave aside the simplifications unavoidable in such a schema, or in any schematization. The objection that might be raised against Gellner is one of fact. First, that the scriptural culture also operates, though at different levels, in rural areas (learned *zawias*, and a teaching of the Koran which is very uneven but everywhere present). And second, that the most powerful and so far most lasting example of revival, the *wahhabite* movement, emerged from one of the most tribal of Arab settings, in the Nejd. This iconoclastic movement arose not in Mecca, with its merchant class, but among the Anaze Bedouin, grouped around the Saudi chiefly, and would perhaps have provided Gellner with just as clear-cut an example of "segmentarity" as the Berbers of the High Atlas.

The studies brought together in this book nevertheless contain many shrewd observations. Hagiology, with its cycles, its sainthood and its "maraboutism" (if we must keep that dangerous word), with their economic and legendary circuits, does compensate for, and up to a point complete the rural order in its apparent compartmentalization. The same might be said of many other networks, economic ones notably, which Gellner does not deny but whose existence he seems to play down. They turn the contours of all local life into the product of multiple "interference" between concrete and formal factors.

I have used the term "interference" metaphor drawn from acoustics. Another metaphor, drawn by this time from the sea, might be that of flux and reflux. If Gellner's dogmatic assertions to the effect that there is one single, right solution to life's problems are automatically suspect, and his aversion to such claims is enhanced by his sardonic perception of the gulf between assertion and performance. Because he holds such views it was always safe to assume that he would not like the Muslim revival and, sure enough, as this lengthy account of his search for the essence of the Islamic resurgence reveals, he did not.

Among the *Believers* is a record of travels in Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia during the latter part of 1979. Naipaul appears to have started with the notion of interviewing great and famous Muslim leaders but he had very little success with this approach and soon settled for his more familiar style of exploiting casual contacts with a small number of middling people encountered along the way. Inevitably, his interlocutors were English-speaking and to some extent, this circumstance cut him off from one of the principal elements in the Islamic revival. Although the educated have played a large part in formulating Islamic programmes and universities have been centres of revivalist propaganda, such efforts would have been of little avail without the support of the half-educated, those new urban immigrants whose linguistic limitations contributed to their hostility to the Westernized elites and to their emphasis upon Islam. Naipaul's situation on his travels is well represented by his own ironic picture of himself: being led by the hand through the traffic of Tehran by an English-speaking Iranian communist.

Despite these disadvantages, Naipaul has produced a quite remarkably perceptive account of certain features of modern Islam. In particular he emphasizes the common ingredient of resentful hostility towards older elites which distils many new arrivals in the cities of Islam and shows how the same impulse may lead either towards a radical, secular programme, such as communism, or towards a radical religious programme, such as Islamic revivalism. The Iranian revolution, he contends, was made by men without political doctrines, only with resentment. Islam, he writes, sanctifies rage. He notes also how the Islamic revival operates not only against the West and the Western-

seems that a sort of balance-wheel governs the alternation between a purification of beliefs and their incorporation into mediatory forms. In this instance Gellner has in mind the "saints", but one might equally well think of rites, languages and signs. And if this is the case, what should we say about that very real sign from which all other signs spring in Islam, to wit, the Koran?

But Gellner does not seek the unity of the world he is studying in terms of the Koran as its highest common factor. With blithe confidence in the virtues of the *gestalt* - albeit, a shifting *gestalt* in this case - he finds his unity in the universal alternation of which I have spoken, just as Hume found it in that between monotheism and polytheism. Gellner locates it in the alternation between a popular Islam fertile in intercessors and an Islam that puri-

fied, but against pre-Islamic survivals within Islam as well. He describes, with some affection, the old easygoing syncretic Islam of Java, with its extensive Hindu elements, and contrasts it with the hard orthodoxy of the revivalists who would root out these elements in the name of the purity of Islam. And he remarks how in Malaysia the Islamic revival is directed as much against Chinese and Tamil penetration as against the West.

One might suspect that Naipaul would prefer the company of the Vicar of Bray to that of John Bunyan. Yet he holds hypocrisy in some distaste and one of his major criticisms of the Islamic revival is based upon this charge. Revivalists who wished to point to a working Islamic state commonly directed Naipaul's attention towards Pakistan. Yet it was Pakistan which Naipaul found most dispiriting of all the states he visited; there, he remarks, everyone accepted the principle of an Islamic state but no one did anything about it. It may be, however, that here Naipaul's rational mind has led him astray and that he pays too much attention to measures and not enough to men.

It is hardly necessary to say that this is a most readable book. While it lacks the special humour of *An Area of Darkness* and the blistering clarity of *India: A Wounded Civilization*, it still contains some memorable portraits. I shall long cherish the sketch of the Pakistani who had achieved a *modus vivendi* with the West with the aid of Benji Blyton, James Hadley Chase, Perry Mason, Elggles, *East of Eden*, *The Good Earth*, and books on sex. They had, Naipaul explains, made the outside world intelligible to him!

Naipaul's situation on his travels is well represented by his own ironic picture of himself: being led by the hand through the traffic of Tehran by an English-speaking Iranian communist. Despite these disadvantages, Naipaul has produced a quite remarkably perceptive account of certain features of modern Islam. In particular he emphasizes the common ingredient of resentful hostility towards older elites which distils many new arrivals in the cities of Islam and shows how the same impulse may lead either towards a radical, secular programme, such as communism, or towards a radical religious programme, such as Islamic revivalism. The Iranian revolution, he contends, was made by men without political doctrines, only with resentment. Islam, he writes, sanctifies rage. He notes also how the Islamic revival operates not only against the West and the Western-

fies both beliefs and observances. Yet can one legitimately derive a law, general both in time and space, from field-work restricted, when all is said and done, to one corner of the Moroccan Atlas?

I allow that this same objection might be made against any developed theoretical work. The vast subject-matter and the staggering synthesis implied in Gellner's title would be hard of attainment, and it is easier to cavil at his book than attempt the task oneself. The vast amount of information it contains, together with the questions which it successfully raises, make this in any case the kind of expose that can be read with genuine intellectual pleasure. Whatever the debate it may provoke among specialists, it has enriched the way in which we look at the Muslim world.

With the revivalists

By M. E. Yapp

V. S. NAIPAUL: Among the Believers. An Islamic Journey. 399pp. André Deutsch. £7.95. 0 233 97416 4

If it had not been already evident from his novels, then the cast of V. S. Naipaul's mind was made clear by his brilliant caricature of the Hindu way of life in *India: A Wounded Civilization*. To Naipaul, dogmatic assertions to the effect that there is one single, right solution to life's problems are automatically suspect, and his aversion to such claims is enhanced by his sardonic perception of the gulf between assertion and performance. Because he holds such views it was always safe to assume that he would not like the Muslim revival and, sure enough, as this lengthy account of his search for the essence of the Islamic resurgence reveals, he did not.

Among the *Believers* is a record of travels in Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia during the latter part of 1979. Naipaul appears to have started with the notion of interviewing great and famous Muslim leaders but he had very little success with this approach and soon settled for his more familiar style of exploiting casual contacts with a small number of middling people encountered along the way. Inevitably, his interlocutors were English-speaking and to some extent, this circumstance cut him off from one of the principal elements in the Islamic revival. Although the educated have played a large part in formulating Islamic programmes and universities have been centres of revivalist propaganda, such efforts would have been of little avail without the support of the half-educated, those new urban immigrants whose linguistic limitations contributed to their hostility to the Westernized elites and to their emphasis upon Islam. Naipaul's situation on his travels is well represented by his own ironic picture of himself: being led by the hand through the traffic of Tehran by an English-speaking Iranian communist.

Despite these disadvantages, Naipaul has produced a quite remarkably perceptive account of certain features of modern Islam. In particular he emphasizes the common ingredient of resentful hostility towards older elites which distils many new arrivals in the cities of Islam and shows how the same impulse may lead either towards a radical, secular programme, such as communism, or towards a radical religious programme, such as Islamic revivalism. The Iranian revolution, he contends, was made by men without political doctrines, only with resentment. Islam, he writes, sanctifies rage. He notes also how the Islamic revival operates not only against the West and the Western-

THE RED EARL

The Papers of the Fifth Earl Spencer Vol. I. 1835-1885

Edited by Peter Gordon

A major new edition of late 19th century political papers based on the archives at Althorp House, Northamptonshire

£15 plus postage & packing

Available from: The Secretary, Northants Record Society, Delapre Abbey, Northampton NN49AW

Agitating for justice

By Patricia Craig

PEADAR O'DONNELL:
The Knife
288pp. Dublin: Irish Humanities Centre. Distributed by Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross. £9.75. (paperback, £3.25). 0 906462 02 9

In his novel *Adriagoole*, published in 1929, Peadar O'Donnell described the hiring fair at the Lagan, near Strabane in Co Donegal, where "the Gaelic servants and the planter masters meet and bargain year after year, since the native power was broken in Ulster". A Scottish Presbyterian colony was established there in the seventeenth century, providing the nucleus of a thriving Unionist enclave; three hundred years later the dispossession of the old Irish still rankles among the natives: "Damn on them," Donal A' Chailleach said to an old crony, "Damn on them; an' it's us should be up here in these lands; bloody lot o' thieves..." In *The Knife*, which appeared in the following year, a minor act of repossession takes place when a Gaelic family, the Godfrey Dhus, becomes sufficiently prosperous to take over a Lagan farm, Montgomerys, which for years had been a solid piece of Protestant property. As in all of O'Donnell's novels, the small event produces extraordinary agitation in the neighbourhood, with everyone

agog for the latest word on the subject.

It is O'Donnell's habit to keep the range of his characters small, and the feelings of each one intense. Political and social passions run high in the striking little communities he depicts. On the *Edge of the Stream* (1934) satisfactorily opposes Catholic superstition with a kind of elementary socialism brought in by a returned emigrant. *Adriagoole* — a very disturbing story, based on a true incident — recounts the miseries of a Gaelic family whose experience of the catastrophic ends in death by starvation. In *The Big Windows* (1955 — probably O'Donnell's most successful work) the central image stands for enlightenment and clarity of vision, qualities imported into a backward mountain village by a young island woman who comes to the district as a bride. The pattern of events in each novel is arranged to illustrate a fundamental principle, generally relating to the author's clear view of economic ills and other flaws in the structure of Irish society.

The Knife deals with class and clan loyalties, shifts in allegiance, mixed motives, betrayals and unexpected alliances between people of opposing political sympathies. "The Knife" is the nickname of Brian Godfrey Dhu (Godfrey Dhu — dark Godfrey — is the father of the family by whose name the children are known, in the standard Gaelic way), an audacious young freedom fighter and respected opponent of the Lagan Orangemen. The Dark Godfreys are matched by

the Black Rowans on the planter side — "It was said of the Rowans that a native never slept under their roof nor broke bread at their table," two formidable families. "There's only one man would be likely to face The Knife, that's Sam Rowan", declares The Knife's vociferous sister, Nuala Godfrey Dhu.

After the annihilating forces evoked in *Adriagoole*, *The Knife* is more optimistic about the possibilities for social change. Among "the servant men of the Lagan" the Godfrey Dhus are not alone in attaining a measure of prosperity; the mountain Burns are moving to the forefront of the community too. But the Burns are rising in a craftier, more conventional way: joining the priest-hood and the professions, and exerting influence thereby. Father John Burns is one brother, James Burns is another; in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, and during the Black and Tan war, James is an associate of The Knife's — but after the signing of the Treaty of 1921 he joins the Free State army while The Knife remains on the Republican side. (The Treaty leaves the Lagan Orangemen high and dry; cut off from their compatriots in the Six Counties and incorporated into a despised Irish state.)

James's defection is a consequence of his rejection by Nuala; The Knife's sister finds Burns's advances not at all to her liking: "... the first time you kissed me: it made me ill." This is putting it plainly, with a vengeance. O'Donnell, in common

with most other Irish writers of his generation, is made uneasy by sexual passion and resorts to the idiom of the romantic novel in dealing with it: "... then, a tremble, she was in his arms". His novels are not in any sense psychological dramas; he never lets us know what the treacherous or twisted characters feel about their delinquencies. He excels, rather, in setting out the definitive action, as in the scene in *The Knife* in which a rabid Orangeman, under the influence of uncontrollable Protestant outrage, fires a shot-gun through a window of Montgomerys, hitting The Knife's elder brother Hugh Godfrey Dhu.

Peadar O'Donnell (born in 1893) was engaged in various forms of socialist agitation for most of his life; naturally his political concerns are reflected in his fiction, which carries implicit condemnation of all methods of action not properly grounded in firm socialist principles. One of his literary aims is to separate genuine integrity from moral posturing: of the latter, "the poor see a shelter in the rich man's piety when they are in the rich man's power: God help them," he states in *The Edge of the Stream*. The greatest evils, as he sees it, are the exploitation of the unwary, the greed of shopkeepers, the blighting association of bourgeois, professional people, Protestant or Catholic, with fixed ideas and interests. "Schoolmasters, policemen, priests, doctors, attorneys, cattle-dealers, they are all alike; they're all friends of the shopkeepers." This is the Ireland of his

reprehensible new rich; Donagh MacDonagh encapsulated it too, in an unedifying trinity: "The jobbers and the gommeen men and the cheats."

There are exceptions, of course. Doctor Henry, in *The Knife*, is a Lagan Protestant whose cheerful intelligence makes him "a poor sort of Orangeman". Like Sam Rowan, who also sets the claims of neighbourliness above planter solidarity, Doctor Henry provides shelter for the fugitive Knife during the civil war which followed the Treaty — and receives a death sentence from the new Free State government for his pains. He and The Knife, condemned to die (as they believe) at least partly through the spitefulness of James Burns, brace themselves to die well; what's in store for them, though, is not extinction but the outlaw's exaltation: "with a whoop they went racing across the heather towards the mountains". It's a symbolic exit.

Few novelists have dealt so thoroughly and effectively with the stresses and complications of rural Irish society, or presented their ideological conflicts with such engaging narrative vigour. O'Donnell is on the side of action and enthusiasm; everything matters, in his novels, and nothing matters so much as social justice. What's important to the author is the fair, disinterested view. His characters are assessed sharply, but not probed deeply, which limits his achievement, perhaps, but makes his purpose no less creditable and his observations no less instructive.

The woe that is in marriage

By David Nokes

JAMES STEPHENS:
Desire and Other Stories
Selected and introduced by Augustina Martin
223pp. Dublin: Poolbeg Press. £2.50. 0 905169 41 7

The centenary of James Joyce's birth next February 2 is also that of James Stephens, who was born in the same city on the same day. This remarkable coincidence of birthdays, Christian names and literary interests was cherished by both men. Towards the end of his life Joyce even asked Stephens to finish *Finnegans Wake* — that philological monument to coincidence and reincarnation — for him, if he should die before completing it. Yet the differences between them were as striking as the parallels. In a radio broadcast, Stephens described Joyce's initial reaction to his work:

He turned his chin and his speck at me, and away down at me, and confided the secret to me that he had read my two books; that grammatically, I did not know the difference between a semi-colon and a colon; that my knowledge of Irish life was non-Catholic and so, non-existent; and that I should give up writing and take to a good job like shoe-shining.

Stephens replied to this lofty snub by asserting that he had never read any of Joyce's work... and that, if Heaven preserved to me, my protective wit, I never would read a word of his, unless I was asked to destructively review it.

Both Joyce and Stephens contributed significantly to the development of the modern Irish short story, and his origins in George Moore's *Stories* (1903). Like Joyce, Stephens began by publishing brief sketches of lower-middle class life in Dublin newspapers. *Dubliners* Joyce declared, was written "in a style of scrupulous incoherence" — those Dubliners for the scene because that day counted to me the centre of my life. Failure and paralysis are also "important" elements in Stephens's portrait of his native city. While Joyce, even at his most brutalistic, instinctively mixes the richness of lower-middle class life with a simple and spare style, the pieces in *Dubliners* are for their enigmatic force, the subtle

literary sophistication nor intellectual weight, but an evocation of that threshold where splendid make-believe and sad reality fake an uncomfortable compromise. Stephens's characters are shabby unglamorous dreamers, precise in habit, poor in spirit, unified in purpose and unfulfilled in desire.

A number of these "stories" are arranged in triads of sketches, such as "Three Heavy Husbands" or "Three Women who Wept", triplicities of figures caught in the fixed attitudes of a type. As the titles indicate, the most frequent subject is the woe that is in marriage. His characters wed in obedience to mere convention. Their expectations of the married state are small, but what they receive even less. In "Darling" we read:

He had married his wife very largely because there was no one else who could so easily be married; and she, after attending quite a respectable time, had married him because no one better had turned up.

Similar sentiments can be found in several of the stories, leading to predictably unhappy conclusions. Stephens's preference for a proverbial and aphoristic style is a predilection for rhythmic repetitions that lend themselves to reading aloud, and betray the influence of an older Celtic tradition. Yet those whose knowledge of Stephens is confined to his fable *The Crock of Gold* may find the harsh realism of his story "Hunger" something of a shock. Published pseudonymously in 1918 it is a stark and harrowing portrait of a

working class family starving to death. "The story is a true one," Stephens later wrote, "and would have killed me but that I got it out of my system this way." The repetitions here enforce a relentless sense of numbing despair.

They could scarcely die of hunger for they were native to it. They were hungry. There was no other hunger but them; and they only made a noise about food when they saw food.

The title story "Desire" is a modernized fairy tale. A man saves a stranger from being run over and killed in traffic. The two men talk, and the stranger asks him what is his greatest desire. The man returns home to his wife and they discuss the question. Eventually he decides that

his fondest wish is to stay forever just as he is at that time. They retire to bed, and the wife has a remarkable dream in which she is freezing in polar regions, trudging through icy wastes. What she finds on waking probably does not need to be revealed.

This volume offers a somewhat uneven selection of stories, yet in that it adequately reflects the varying quality of Stephens's work. His career was very much bound up with the development of the Irish literary movement, and he was a member of both Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League. His work, ranging from Celtic fables and fairy stories to pieces of working class realism, indicates the rival claims of revolution and romanticism on the imagination of that movement.

Still, what was done is well done. MacAlone presents his hero as affirming aristocratic values while rebelling against their limitations. Descendant of an old noble line of merchants, magistrates, and military men; son of a fashionable society painter; stubborn, charming, slight, shrill-voiced, and given to gesticulation; Coubertin was a strange man, condemned to marginality both by his social class and by his views within his class. Republican in a legitimate family, friend of Protestants (and married to one) despite a strongly Catholic background, Coubertin asserted democratic views in élitist terms, patriotic passion in an internationalist language that lent itself to the wildest nationalism, and a high sense of honour in the restoration of an anti-utilitarian competition soon to lapse into exploitation of every sort.

A clash of family and cultural values saddled the young Coubertin with "serious psychodynamic conflict folded into... psychosocial dramas" (happily, an untypical quotation!) It may be also that he was short in stature and the youngest of three sons. To the lay eye, he resolved his conflicts, quite well: the classical education the Jesuits gave him provided appropriate quotations for numerous articles and speeches, and a crucial inspiration. It taught him to idealize ancient life (not a bad model for those who ignore its details), the higher morality of honour and prowess, the code of noblesse oblige. He also had the income for his values: a capital of 500,000 gold francs, all of which he was to spend in the pursuit of distinction through service.

His parents had destined him for the priesthood, but settled for St-Cyr. Though he liked fencing and riding, military life in peacetime did not hold out the promise of distinguished action, and St-Cyr was abandoned after a few months. Coubertin decided, or so he later claimed, to attach his name to a great pedagogical reform. He had read Taine about English success in building character, and *The Schoolboys* which showed how this was done. At twelve his first trip to England revealed a model of nobility, a heroic pedagogy turning out a modern aristocracy, Christian, manly and enlightened.

BIOGRAPHY

The Esperanto of the races

By Eugen Weber

JOHN J. MACALONE:
This Great Symbol
Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games
359pp. University of Chicago Press. £15. 0 225 50000 4

As newspapers settle more firmly into creative incoherence, some of the liveliest writing takes refuge in the sports pages. A similar trend may be taking shape with books about sports, only a trickle as yet, but refreshingly readable. On the heels of Richard Holt's recent *Sport and Society in Modern France*, comes John J. MacAlone's study of Pierre de Coubertin, written — and well written — by a psychological anthropologist with a bent for history. It is the first book to place Coubertin and the Olympic Games he recreated in a historical context; the first also to provide a serious biography of this complex man.

Unfortunately, not a complete one. MacAlone carries Coubertin from his birth on New Year's Day, 1837, to the mitigated triumph of the first modern Olympics in Athens, in 1896. This is less than half the lifespan of the seventy-four-year-old gentleman, white-whiskered and frock-coated, who died in 1937, in a Geneva park; and it covers only one of the ten Olympic occasions of his life, thus depriving us of a great many episodes of an uneven progress. One gathers that a second volume will carry the tale to a close, but the break in 1896 must reflect the author's convenience rather than internal logic. His treatment makes one want to read on, and the decision to close with the century has the impact of the duck ditty: "You think it's the end of the song? Well, it is." Not for long, one hopes.

Still, what was done is well done. MacAlone presents his hero as affirming aristocratic values while rebelling against their limitations. Descendant of an old noble line of merchants, magistrates, and military men; son of a fashionable society painter; stubborn, charming, slight, shrill-voiced, and given to gesticulation; Coubertin was a strange man, condemned to marginality both by his social class and by his views within his class. Republican in a legitimate family, friend of Protestants (and married to one) despite a strongly Catholic background, Coubertin asserted democratic views in élitist terms, patriotic passion in an internationalist language that lent itself to the wildest nationalism, and a high sense of honour in the restoration of an anti-utilitarian competition soon to lapse into exploitation of every sort.

A clash of family and cultural values saddled the young Coubertin with "serious psychodynamic conflict folded into... psychosocial dramas" (happily, an untypical quotation!) It may be also that he was short in stature and the youngest of three sons. To the lay eye, he resolved his conflicts, quite well: the classical education the Jesuits gave him provided appropriate quotations for numerous articles and speeches, and a crucial inspiration. It taught him to idealize ancient life (not a bad model for those who ignore its details), the higher morality of honour and prowess, the code of noblesse oblige. He also had the income for his values: a capital of 500,000 gold francs, all of which he was to spend in the pursuit of distinction through service.

His parents had destined him for the priesthood, but settled for St-Cyr. Though he liked fencing and riding, military life in peacetime did not hold out the promise of distinguished action, and St-Cyr was abandoned after a few months. Coubertin decided, or so he later claimed, to attach his name to a great pedagogical reform. He had read Taine about English success in building character, and *The Schoolboys* which showed how this was done. At twelve his first trip to England revealed a model of nobility, a heroic pedagogy turning out a modern aristocracy, Christian, manly and enlightened.

His vocation confirmed by this vision, inspired by the English public schools and in particular by Dr Arnold's (and Tom Brown's) Rugby, he returned to France determined to use *la pédagogie sportive* to revivify first his own social class, then all society. Lycées were to become schools of patriotism and moral training. Athletic games would teach French schoolboys manliness and self-reliance, "harden" as he put it in a public lecture of 1887, "a flabby, listless, confined youth; its body and its character."

Gymnastics were too limiting and rigid for this purpose; military exercises were not free enough; physical — and character — development called for "joy and liberty." Like Jules Simon, the grand old statesman whom he enlisted in his campaign for English-style sports, Coubertin demanded the right to play for the freedom, the enthusiasm and the passionate excess to which competitive games could lead.

France, of course, had no tradition of schoolboy sports, and Coubertin's appreciation of their "impassioned activity" and gratefulness ("Sport is a physical discipline sustained by enthusiastic addition to unnecessary effort") went far beyond the moderate recipe of *mens sana in corpore sano*. Enthusiasm, liberty and schoolboy association went against the French grain, as did the English inspiration of it all. Since sticky wickets never caught on in France, let us say that Coubertin had a hard row to hoe.

All his life, Coubertin drew fresh vitality from foreign contacts. After England, America. In 1887, with

Jules Ferry lending a helping hand, the young baron set off to report on schools and universities in the United States and Canada — an official commission the more readily delivered since the *chargé de mission* paid his own expenses. He met Theodore Roosevelt, Professor William M. Sloane of Princeton (his Olympic representative-to-be), saw at first hand the mass popularity of spectator sports, and returned to Paris in good time to be fascinated by the World's Fair of 1889, from which he learnt that public spectacle and individual feats of prowess could profitably be combined. The context that would best advance Coubertin's purpose lay ready to hand.

One of this book's many virtues is that it shows that the Olympic idea was scarcely strange to the *fin-de-siècle*. German archaeologists were digging at Olympia, Scandinavian "Olympic Games" had been held in the 1830s; English ones, at Much Wenlock in Shropshire, which Coubertin attended, had been going on since the 1840s; some of his associates attended a seminary near Grenoble which had its own "Olympic" tradition; and one of his rivals, Paschal Grousset, had campaigned in favour of an Olympic festival for France. The Greeks promoted "Olympian games" in Athens in 1859, and several succeeding festivals in 1870, 1875 and 1889. In 1885, Ferdinand de Lesseps had called for a revival of the Olympic Games in Paris. But only Coubertin would bring it off.

By the 1890s his labours on behalf of sports were beginning to show results. Bicycling had become a popular sport without his help, but

football was prospering among the elect. Football and running enthusiasts from public and private schools founded Le Racing (1882), then the Stade Français (1883) and a host of provincial clubs, finally in 1890 the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA), over which Coubertin presided. He successfully soothed suspicion of new-fangled sports, hostile headmasters, feuds between adherents of rugby and soccer, negotiated political rapids, and triumphed over widespread indifference until, in 1894, he launched his Olympic idea in an international Congress at the Sorbonne. He aimed, he later said, not to convince but to seduce; and he succeeded, by way of a long string of banquets, fêtes and other ceremonies for most of which he paid himself. In April 1896, on an Easter Monday when Western and European Easter coincided, the King of Greece opened the modern Olympic Games in Athens, revived after a fifteen-century break.

This last part of the book is especially good. Coubertin's cobbling together of an International Olympic Committee and its fragility; the national and international manoeuvres surrounding the occasion; Greek internal tensions, the Olympic policies of the Greek royal family looking for popular support and symbolic identification with ancient Hellas, the conservative opposition and the liberal support, the American athletes with their college yells, the French runner, Lermusiaux, who ran the 800 metres in white gloves because King George was present, the national pride and popular enthusiasm culminating in a Greek shepherd's winning the Marathon race,

the deliberate neglect of Coubertin by Greek organizers who wanted to keep the games in Athens for good and the failure of their plans after the disastrous 1897 war with Turkey over Crete — a conflict not unrelated to the national intoxication of the Games — are masterfully treated, with the account spiced throughout by the acid comments of Charles Maurras. Nor is the point of view that of a scholar only, but that of an athlete who knows his subject by intuition as well as by research. MacAlone has been a runner, and can evoke his own emotions as well as hitherto unknown facts. But 1897, or thereabouts, is where he ends, with Coubertin, clear of the Scylla of Greek monopolizing of "his" Games, preparing for the Charybdis of the coming ones, which would be disastrously linked to World's Fairs — in Paris (1900) and St Louis (1904) — whose horrors the Olympics would outlast only with difficulty.

But outlast it they did, thanks largely to the stubborn commitment of one man so driven and inspired that he would not let go. Avid dreamer and sturdy pragmatist, MacAlone's hero was one of the formidable entrepreneurs of his time, blessed with the vision and drive peculiarly vouchsafed to some of the greatest of the Greek royal family that allowed him to pursue his grand obsession. By the time Coubertin died, he had spent it all. But he had won an Olympic gold medal (anonymously, for poetry, in 1912), he had ensured not only the revival but the survival of one of the great spectacles of the twentieth century, and had established sport, in Giraudoux's phrase, as "the Esperanto of the races."

Moor at home

By Alan Ryan

DAVID MCLELLAN (Editor):
Karl Marx
Interviews and Recollections
186pp. Macmillan. £15. 0 333 28362 7

This jolly little volume raises — as all such volumes do — the old question of whether we are right to take more interest in the lives of great men than we take in the lives of anyone else. There are obviously instances where the answer is yes, and where it is no. Intimately related to their private lives that our understanding of their achievements is vastly enriched by biography — Palmer's biography of Proust surely settles the question in that instance at least. But what about Marx? Aren't we admonished by Marxian theory to ignore the individual behind the doctrine? If the Marxist suspicion of "Great Men" theories of history is justified, shouldn't we treat Marxianism itself as the anonymous and impersonal output of the forces of intellectual production of its epoch? If not, the revolution would break out to a very secondary rank, the truth seems to be that Marx thought that socialism might be indefinitely delayed if premature uprisings played into the hands of the existing powers. Interviewed by a reporter from the Chicago *Tribune*, Marx praises the way the workers of Berlin declined to be provoked by Bismarck — a view which far all of a piece with his fear that the Paris Commune would set the cause of revolution back by twenty-five years by getting the most active workers and their leaders murdered in a one-sided fight.

The view which sustained Lenin and Trotsky forty years later is articulated in a discussion at the Devonshire Club in early 1873, reported on by Mount Stuart Grant Duff:

He looks, not unreasonably, for a great and not distant crash in Russia, thinks it will begin by reforms from above which the old bad edifice will not be able to bear and which will lead to its tumbling down altogether. Next he thinks that the movement will spread to Germany taking there the form of a revolt against the existing military system.

economic revolution must necessarily be followed by a political revolution, for the latter is but the expression of the former."

Kautsky, who first met Marx only shortly before his death, recalls Marx's ascription on being asked when Volume 2 of *Capital* would appear — it was to Kautsky that Marx made the famous reply to the suggestion that it was time to publish his complete works that "they would first have to be completely written". But, none of these reminiscences gets far with the content of Marx's incomplete works.

What they do offer that possesses some intellectual interest — it goes without saying that "Moor at Home" is riveting in much the same way as *The Diary of an Edwardian Lady* — is a glimpse of Marx's understanding of European politics. Although Liebknecht makes it look as though Marx relegated the question of when, where and how the revolution would break out to a very secondary rank, the truth seems to be that Marx thought that socialism might be indefinitely delayed if premature uprisings played into the hands of the existing powers. Interviewed by a reporter from the Chicago *Tribune*, Marx praises the way the workers of Berlin declined to be provoked by Bismarck — a view which far all of a piece with his fear that the Paris Commune would set the cause of revolution back by twenty-five years by getting the most active workers and their leaders murdered in a one-sided fight.

The view which sustained Lenin and Trotsky forty years later is articulated in a discussion at the Devonshire Club in early 1873, reported on by Mount Stuart Grant Duff:

He looks, not unreasonably, for a great and not distant crash in Russia, thinks it will begin by reforms from above which the old bad edifice will not be able to bear and which will lead to its tumbling down altogether. Next he thinks that the movement will spread to Germany taking there the form of a revolt against the existing military system.

increase in the social budget sufficient to fend off revolution.

"Ah," was his answer, "they can't do that. All sorts of fears and jealousies will make that impossible. The burden will grow worse and worse as science advances for the improvements in the art of destruction will keep pace with its advance and every year more and more will have to be devoted to costly engines of war. It is a vicious circle — there is no escape from it."

Obviously, there is not much in these pages beyond strikingly good sense and an excellent political imagination, but these are hardly to be derided.

All the same, the plums here are essentially domestic and trivial. In this year of Royal Wedding fever, it's nice to learn from Eleanor Marx that her older sister Jenny familiarly addressed her father as "Challey" or Charley and that his nickname for her was "DJ". Marx's taste for vile cigars is referred to more than once, and Liebknecht tells the splendid story of how his search for the cheapest possible smoke led him to a brand at 1s 6d which "brought forth his political-economic talent for saving: with every box he smoked he

"saved" 1s 6d. Consequently, the more he smoked the more he saved." If he managed to consume a box per day, then he could live at a pinch on his "savings"... after the lapse of some months the family physician had to intervene... or Marx would have saved himself, to death. What with slings-and-arrows, good cheer, and Hamstead Heath and the company of his daughters, life chez Marx could be extremely agreeable. Even in the first, painful and impoverished years of their exile in London, when they were harassed by duns, battered by the deaths of their children, and embittered by the treacherous and recriminations left over from the failures of 1848, the family was astonishingly resilient — the anonymous "Prussian Spy" who complains about the risk to your trousers from the children's cooking games confesses that the conversation is "spirited and agreeable", the company "interesting and original" and the welcome "most friendly". And that, after all, comes from a hostile witness. £15 is a lot to pay for this, though, and it's hard to see why anyone would prefer this rag-bag, engaging though it is, to Mrs Kapp's biography of Eleanor Marx in which most of this material is put to such good use.

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN HISTORY SERIES

edited by Raymond Williams

English Literature in History 1380-1400

Medieval Readers and Writers

Janet Coleman

This book is the first in a new series which seeks to examine literature within its historical context. The author covers a wide range of themes; social unrest, the increase of literacy and the popularization of theological learning, to demonstrate their impact on the literature of the period.

£12.00 cased 09 1441005 £3.95 paper 09 1441013

Liberty and Love

English Literature and Society 1640-80

Peter Macklin

Literature as diverse as the satire of Dryden and the political theory of Hobbes is discussed within the context of two important moments of the day — the nature of the civilisation and the role and status of women.

£10.00 cased 09 1430042 £4.50 paper 09 1430040

HUTCHINSON EDUCATION 17 Convent Street, London W1

Denominational distinctions

By Patrick Collinson

RICHARD L. GREAVES:

Society and Religion in Elizabethan England

925pp. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. £19.50.
0 8166 1030 4

"The compleat worke, very briefly comprehended in a portable book (it your horse be too weak) of an hundred, threescore and twelve sheets of good demi paper." Martin Marprelate's joke at the expense of a certain Elizabethan tome of controversial divinity springs to mind as one weighs in the hand this work of almost a thousand pages and of a thickness associated with the Bible or the *Alternative Service Book*. The astonishment and almost justified claim of the author is to have explored the thought of the Elizabethan religious public, Anglican, Puritan, Catholic and Separatist, on "nearly every topic of social significance".

There are, to be sure, some gaps, including painting and other aspects of aesthetics. Two of Keith Thomas's favourite subjects, laughter and animals, are also missing, although a section on "cruel sports soothes Macaulay's unjustified sneer about Puritans and bear-baiting." (Philip Stubbes in *The Anatomie of Abuses* asked: "What christian heart can take pleasure to see one poore beast to rent, teare, and kill another, and all for his foolish pleasure?") A section on "Society and the Spoken Word" strangely fails to mention that Puritans (unlike some bishops) were hostile to swearing, a short section on music is silent on the important subject of psalm-singing, and the use by some Puritans of curious baptismal names ("of godly signification") is barely mentioned. Poverty and the fashionable topic of death are dealt with, but not disease and the subject of public health measures, which divided religious opinion in 1603 and sent one London preacher to prison for two years.

But the reader is more likely to be impressed by the amazing variety of the subjects which are represented than critical of such omissions. As in the proud boast of a certain Sunday newspaper, practically all human life is here, from food and drink to monumental brasses, from hospitality to usury, from prostitution to weights and measures. In form, the book is an immense, systematic *summa*, although the arrangement of topics is occasionally a trifle bizarre, as in the chapter "Social Conduct and Social Order" which contains items on clothing, speech, books and libraries, suicide (a particularly interesting section) and war. The extent of Dr Greaves's sourcing is astounding. There are 1,560 footnotes, each containing as many as a dozen citations: a deep well of perhaps 12,000, perhaps 15,000 references into which other Elizabethan specialists will lower grateful buckets. The use made of the margins of bibles (not only of the Geneva Bible) constitutes in itself a major research undertaking. In addition, about 500 other contemporary religious books have been read, together with a variety of other printed and manuscript sources and almost all the relevant scholarly literature. No wonder the work is dedicated to the author's young daughters, with acknowledgement of the "sacrifices and understanding" which the writing of it entailed.

Consequently, it gives no great pleasure to record a harsh verdict on this immensely informative compilation. The judgment that the entire edifice is founded on a shaky base of argument. To change the image, we are impaled once again on the horn of the familiar but partly fallacious Puritan-Anglican dichotomy. And we can almost forget about the three other religious "publics" which Greaves has embraced in his survey: the use of Catholic sources has been limited; while the Separatists are mentioned, they are not mentioned in any of any consequence on most of the matters under review. So for all practical purposes, the

enquiry is based on the proposition that to make sense of religion-in-society in Elizabethan England it is sufficient to discover what the Puritans had to say on the one hand and then what the Anglicans were saying on the other. For some time now several historians of the period have been trying to explain (and it appears that we shall have to go on trying) that this procedure will not work, since there were no hard-and-fast Puritan and Anglican positions. "Anglican" is an anachronism. Although "anti-Puritan" "conformist" and "formalist" are all legitimate terms which point to recognizable tendencies. As for "Puritan", it is an important word, not to be lightly discarded from historical discourse, but like all terms of stigmatization it is to be handled delicately, like a hand-grenade with the pin half pulled. It scarcely describes what J. F. H. New once called a "unity of principle".

Greaves's attitude to this crucial issue is strangely ambivalent. At an early stage he acknowledges that the most appropriate model for the location of Elizabethan religious parties may be a continuum, running from a far right of papists to a far left of fringe sects (but in the contemporary perception this was the right wing - *Error on the Right Hand* as a work by Henoch Clapham puts it) and passing on the way through conservative Anglicans, moderate Anglicans, conservative Puritans, moderate Puritans, more extreme Puritans. Yet he appears to regard these as fixed points on a rigid scale, not as a system of dynamic relationships. And the continuum is soon discarded for the simple polarity of Anglican and Puritan. In Greaves's estimation, Puritans were real, identifiable and even measurable people, twenty-five out of 567 Yorkshire gentry families in 1570, 138 out of 679 in 1642, "an increase of 15.9%". He finds it possible to say, with startling confidence, where these people lived. "Geographically their strength was greater in regions devoted to pastoral farming, where the farmhouse was the focal point of life." (Really? Regions like Westmorland and Merioneth for instance?) "The important point", writes Greaves, "is that Puritans were essentially recognizable to Anglicans as Puritans." But who were the "Anglicans"? Were they "essentially recognizable" as such? Often the business of labelling was an elaborate and malicious game rather than a matter of field studies. "If I be a papist," an archbishop of York told his dean, "thou be a puritan."

If Greaves were able to demonstrate a real and consistent difference of outlook between Puritans and Anglicans on most of the topics with which he deals, then to construct a survey of moral and social divinity on these principles would have some relevance for the purpose of the enquiry. But this he is honestly unable to do. Again and again he discloses a community of thought on the matters at issue. The almost equally thorough study by C. L. and K. George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation* (Princeton, 1961), might have led him to expect this. Greaves tells us that "Puritans and Anglicans agreed on the basic responsibilities of parents", were "harmonious" in their views on apparel, "substantially agreed in their position on suicide", "united in purpose" so far as various economic questions were concerned. Even in an area where one might have expected to find important differences, such as heresies, Greaves discovers a "blurring of positions", "a fair degree of overlapping". Some of these observations are ponderous and predictable. We scarcely need to be told that "both groups found bastardy, prostitution, sodomy, incest and rape unacceptable, socially as well as morally".

Other points of alleged agreement are more striking. It is interesting that Greaves has found almost no "peculiarly Puritan economic attitudes". The significant departure from such conservative paternalistic attitudes towards poverty, "and distinctive

Puritan work ethic in the sense in which this phrase is normally used" (But to fault "the Weber thesis" which is not necessarily his intention, it would be necessary to investigate the Calvinist doctrine of predestinate grace which Weber believed was the mainspring of the "inner-worldly ascetic").

Yet, in no way dismayed by these blind leads, Greaves forges on, and occasionally his willingness to search for Puritan-Anglican differences lands him in absurd situations. He hopes that analysis of two samples of supposedly Puritan and Anglican clerical families may reveal that Puritan families were less ready than Anglicans to employ methods of contraception. For the Puritan parents reproduced at the rate of 5.8 children per household, the Anglicans at only 5.4. But there are no more than forty families in each sample, and the Puritan figure is depressed by placing in the Anglican group Andrew Willett, a distinguished divine who, as Greaves admits, cannot be usefully defined either way, and who as it happens fathered no less than eighteen children. If I were J. H. Hexter, I should call that a statistical absurdity erected on a taxonomical fallacy.

At the end of the hard-fought day, we are left with a miscellaneous shopping-list of more or less social topics where "significant differences" in outlook between Anglicans and Puritans can be shown to have developed. They include (and I follow Greaves's order) several aspects of marriage and divorce, the punishment of sexual offenders, some details of family life, the place of chaplains in episcopal households, the responsibility of servants in rebuking errant masters, parts of the educational curriculum, academic dress, degrees in divinity, sabbatarianism, church ales, holy days, church music, "war theory", the role of deacons, usury, the oath *ex officio mero* and ecclesiastical courts.

Greaves is not wrong about these matters. Elizabethan churchmen did hold differing views about many things. Some, such as the *ex officio* oath, were even divisive. Inclusion of theological, ecclesiastical and moral topics beyond the scope of this book would serve to underline still more sharply the divided condition of the English Church in this period. Such mutually hostile tendencies are to be expected in religious and social life. But some of the divisions occurred within the ranks of those whom Greaves would represent monolithically, as Puritans: sabbatarian differences (for a time) over the application of the fourth commandment, differences over the interpretation of the Apocalypse, unbridgeable and ultimately fatal differences over church polity, hot to speak of merely temperamental or tactical differences. But such difficulties were mitigated by the constant quest for the middle ground, the mean or *via media* which Greaves mentions only once, in connection with eating and drinking.

The body of Elizabethan Protestantism was not neatly divided into two well-defined and clearly-labelled parties. That Greaves mostly assumes that it was, if only by the terminology he employs; even when it is inconsistent with his conclusions, will render a richly informative, if somewhat ponderous book retrospective in the eyes of many historians, particularly on this side of the Atlantic. Insofar as Dr Greaves succeeds in convincing his readers, it will serve to delay a more balanced and realistic assessment of the Elizabethan religious scene.

The Royal Historical Society's *Annual Bibliography of British and Irish History: Publications of 1980* has recently been published under the general editorship of G. R. Elton (205pp. Brighton: Harvester, £18.95; 0 7108 3361 3). Seven of the book's thirteen sections deal with general British history according to a chronological plan, with each section subdivided thematically. Wales, Scotland and Ireland receive separate treatment.



Edmund Campion: from a seventeenth-century engraving by J. Neef, based on an earlier portrait. A British Library exhibition marking the quatercentenary of Campion's death is currently on display in the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1, where it will continue until February 1982.

Information, please

"Information, please" is a service which is available free of charge. Those wishing to use it are asked to follow as closely as possible the form in which items are presented here, and to mark envelopes "Information, please".

Lord Colin Campbell (1853-95), barrister and politician, and his wife, née Gertrude Elizabeth Blood (1858-1911): any relevant information sought for a study.

G. H. Fleming, Department of English, University of New Orleans, Lake Front, New Orleans, Louisiana 70122.

William Alexander Harvey (1875-1951), architect: any letters, drawings, plans, photographs or reminiscences; for a study.

Peter Atkins, 19 Somerdale Road, Northfield, Birmingham.

Alexander Henry the Younger: any information on date and location of his birth, and also his early life before 1799; whereabouts of any portraits also sought; for an annotated edition of his manuscript journal of his life in the North American West 1799-1814.

Barry M. Gough, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3C5.

Robert Lee MacCamaron (1866-1912): for a study of this American painter of portraits and genre paintings, any information concerning the artist and the present whereabouts of his works.

Lisa Holst, Williams College Museum of Art, Lawrence Hall, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267.

Cecil Pinnett, British architect: whereabouts of his collection of correspondence and memorabilia; for a biography of his close friend Geoffrey Scott, author of *The Architecture of Humanism*.

Mervyn Secret, "Halcyon", PO Box 395, Walpole, New Hampshire 03608.

Paul Rotha, documentary-film maker and theorist: photographs, letters, reminiscences, etc., sought; for a study, and a retrospective of Rotha's work to be held in January 1982 at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford.

Lynne Fredlund, Oxford Film Makers Workshop, The Stables, North Place, Headington, Oxford OX3 9HY.

Whistler-Ruskin trial, 1877-78: any private information or reminiscences; for a book in progress.

Robin Spencer, Department of Fine Art, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9AL.

T. Hewitt Myring (or Meyring), engineer (?) working in Bolivia c. 1900, when he photographed excavations of Moche pottery in the Chicama Valley, northern Peru; whereabouts of these photographs, and of possible notes and drawings, sought; also information about any surviving descendants.

B. K. de Boek, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, PO Box 212, 2300 AB, Leiden, Netherlands.

Str Flinders Petrie (1853-1942), archaeologist: reminiscences, private letters or other information sought, especially from those who dug with him; for a biography.

Margaret S. Drower, 8 Willenhall Avenue, Barnet, Herts EN5 1JN.

A. L. Rowse, Trenarren House, St Austell, Cornwall.

Donald Sutherland (1915-78), American classicist, translator and critic: whereabouts of any correspondence, drafts of stories or essays; for editions of his letters and essays.

Lynn Martin, English Department, Nassau Community College, Garden City, New York 11530.

Leslie Wilson, artist: whereabouts of a watercolour painting by him, which was reproduced on the dust-jacket of the novel *Therapy* (1977) by my grandfather G. Frederick Clarke; or for any surviving copies of the dust-jacket.

Mary Bernard, 3 Willow Walk, Cambridge.

The eagle's eye view

By Robert Browning

ARNOLD TOYNBEE:

The Greeks and Their Heritage
334pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.50.
0 19 215256 4

Few men knew Greece so well as Arnold Toynbee. Steeped in Greek literature as a schoolboy at Winchester, he went on to study the history and philosophy of Greece at Balliol, and then to spend a year from 1911 to 1912 wandering in Greece and Asia Minor, learning to know the land and the people, their language and their thoughts. Long before the days of the tourist he had penetrated, often on foot, to the remotest regions to look, listen and talk. He saw the terrible events of 1914 to 1918 through the eyes of Thucydides and Sophocles, and discerned in the history of the West in his own time a quality of tragic inevitability. Thus was born the idea of *A Study of History*, in which he went on, in the years from 1921 to 1953, to fit into his tragic pattern of genesis, growth, breakdown and disintegration the totality of human existence. It needed some pushing and pulling to make the facts fit the pattern. But Toynbee was never afraid to revise his views in the light of experience.

The publication of *A Study of History* made him a celebrity, a prophet, a guru. Books and lectures flowed from his pen, his *obiter dicta* were tape-recorded and made into books by lesser men. Few in the turbulent years of the Cold War and

its aftermath thought of him as a Hellenist. Yet his thoughts constantly returned to the ancient Mediterranean and to Greece in particular, for it was there that he had been faced with the fundamental problems of the development of human society, and there that he had found the germ of his answer to them. In 1955 there appeared his *Hellenism*, in 1965 the massive *Hannibal's Legacy*, in 1969 *Some Problems of Greek History*, and in 1973 *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, in which he surveyed the whole of the Byzantine period of Greek history. When he was forced to stop writing by a stroke in 1974 he had completed the first draft of *The Greeks and Their Heritage*. It is altogether fitting that a scholar who had begun his career in 1910 with a paper on Herodotus should crown it with a study of tradition and innovation over more than three thousand years of Greek history.

The book shows signs of the lack of a final revision. There are repetitions, uncritical acceptance of views which recent research has undermined, apparently irrelevant digressions. But beware! Those who know *A Study of History* will recall that Toynbee's digressions are sometimes the most significant part of his text. There are perhaps signs, too, of the diminution in his phenomenal capacity for work which followed a severe heart attack in the early 1970s. Yet he still retains an almost Aristotelian gift of perceiving the general in a welter of particulars, and occasionally he displays almost blinding insight.

The pessimism which sometimes marked his middle years is gone, as is the religiously tinged optimism of his earlier years. The tone is tranquil, rational, humane. Old age, maybe, but the old age of the eagle.

Toynbee's concern is with what four stages in the history of the Greek people inherited from their predecessors, how they used it, and whether or not it turned out to be a *damnum hereditas*. The stages are the Mycenaean world, the Hellenic world, the Byzantine world, and the world of modern Greece. In *A Study of History* these are all treated as separate civilizations. But in the volumes of that work the concept of civilizations as philosophically contemporaneous was already being replaced by an emphasis on the whole of history. From being cyclical, history was becoming linear - and sometimes teleological. In the present book there is little left of the metaphysics of discrete civilizations, nor is there much teleology. Greek history is seen as a whole - a whole of particular interest to the historian because of its long duration and its catastrophic breaks, a whole in which the grip of the past can be seen with especial clarity.

The classical Hellenes, Toynbee argues, inherited enough from the Mycenaean world to fuel their creative imagination, but not so much that they were dominated by it. The heritage of the Byzantines from the classical world contained two elements which distorted and inhibited the growth of Byzantine civilization - the incubus of the Eastern Roman Empire and that of the Hellenic *paideia*, a body of aesthetic and moral values enshrined in an educational system. The Modern Greeks inherited from their Byzantine forebears these same ancestral curses in the form of the Great Idea and the Lasting Question - together with the Byzantines' own antipathy to the

West. The difficulties of their heritage have been only partly surmounted. And like Homer's horsemen who leap from one moving steed to another, the Modern Greeks have opted - or been forced - to change civilizations. They now belong to the post-Christian Western world of nation-states. But like old warriors they bear the scars of long-forgotten battles.

All this is argued with the wealth of learning and the sharpness of perception we expect from the author. Few readers will find it all equally convincing. All who read it with care will find it challenging. To quibble over details would exceed the scope of a review. The reviewer was privileged to discuss parts of the draft with the author shortly before his death, and is touched to see how many trivial points he then made are taken up in footnotes. Perhaps one more general criticism will be permitted. It is that Toynbee does not give sufficient weight to the way in which the later Greeks - and no doubt some other peoples - are aware of having two pasts. The Byzantines knew that they had both a Hellenic and a Christian heritage. Gregory of Nazianzus rebukes those who wanted to reject the Hellenic element in their intellectual tradition as dangerous and inimical to religion; they make a great mistake. The emperor Alexius Comnenus, when he was accused of using church plate to pay for his wars, quoted in his defence the examples of David and Pericles. Nicephorus Blennymides, in the thirteenth century, cited Solomon and Marcus Aurelius as models of a terse and laconic style - an un-Byzantine virtue. The Greeks today have taken over - or have been taken over by - the intellectual

heritage of the Western world without entirely abandoning their own Byzantine and Hellenic pasts, often mediated by the Orthodox Church. This can be a position of strength rather than of weakness. It is not quite true to say with Toynbee that "political liberation has entailed for the Modern Greeks a violent break with all their cultural heritages".

There are several detailed appendices to the book. In the last of these, on Geminus Pletho's Totalitarian Hellenism, Toynbee gives a conventional account of Pletho's Neoplatonism and his utopian political projects. Then he comes to Pletho's revival of pre-Christian Hellenic religion. Was this nonsense, as most scholars have maintained from the fifteenth to the twentieth century? No, says Toynbee. Christianity gave man licence to exploit the whole of the non-human residue of Nature. Today we realize that this road leads to universal destruction. The non-human part of Nature is as divine as the human, and we violate its rights at our peril. "Pletho had the nerve to re-evolve these banished gods . . . and to present them in their authentic role as symbols of the divinity inherent in non-human Nature." The old wizard has once again illuminated things with a new light. Never mind whether it is the adulterated light of truth. It makes us think, and that is what Toynbee tried to do through sixty-five years of active life.

This is not Toynbee's greatest book, nor even one of his greatest. But it is a striking memorial to the genius of Greece in the thought of the man whom V. I. McNeill called "the most famous historian of his time and the most controversial".

Between love and strife

By Malcolm Schofield

M. R. WRIGHT (Editor):

Empedocles: The Extant Fragments
364pp. Yale University Press. £28.
0 300 02475 4

The recent history of Empedocles scholarship is a curious one. If at any point in most of our lifetimes prior to 1965 you had asked a scholar of Greek philosophy to refer you to a reliable account of Empedocles' physical system, he would probably have had little hesitation in recommending Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, first published in 1892 and still (in its fourth edition) excellent value. In particular, he would have been unlikely to entertain qualms about Burnet's presentation of Empedocles' cosmology. Was Empedocles' cosmos created by separation from an original unity (like Anaximander's) or by conglomeration from an original plurality (like that of the ancient atomists)? Burnet replied: both. It is known that Empedocles posited a never-ending cycle in which, owing to the alternate dominance of two forces he called love and strife, the mass of the universe oscillated between a condition of total unity and one of division into the four elements. According to Burnet, Empedocles held that one world (of which our own is an instance) is formed as diversity emerges from total unity and another world as plurality once more merges into unity.

In 1965 three scholars, working quite independently in three different countries, published essays arguing that this *idee reçue* of Empedocles' system was wrong. Friedrich Solmsen (USA) and Otto Hölscher (Germany) in the learned *Journal*, and Jean Bollack (France) in the first instalment of what proved to be a four-volume work. According to the alternative conception advanced by Bollack and Solmsen in particular, Empedocles posits the generation of a single world only in any given "revolution" of his cosmic cycle, its basic structure - a central earth, surrounded by "masses of water and air (in the heavens) fire" - is due to division from an original unity, but this "countless tribes of mortal things" - plants, beasts, men - are formed by merging and mixture of the distinct elements into unity once more. This new proposal met at the same time as these scholars were writing, and again independently. A British scholar, Denis O'Brien, had judged that the *idee reçue*, although correct, was in need of comprehensive defence and clarification. And in an article of 1967 followed by a book in 1969, delayed by the need to meet the arguments of the opposition, he published his apologia.

In the next few years a number of leading students of Greek philosophy declared themselves convinced by the new view of Empedocles, among them C. H. Kahn, A. A. Long and Jaap Mansfeld. But interest in the topic has faded as quickly as it burgeoned; and the *idee reçue* probably retains its hold over most who look into Empedocles' fragments, thanks to its appearance in such standard works of ancient philosophy as Kirk and Raven's *Presocratic Philosophers* (1957) and the second volume of Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy* (1965, as luck would have it). The fact is that Empedocles is not, like Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Zeno, a thinker of abiding appeal to philosophers; and the controversy I have described has so far failed to suggest to historians of Greek philosophy profitable new lines of enquiry - not altogether deservedly, since the great philosophical merit of the new proposal is the higher degree of consistency in Empedocles' notions of creation. It is to Empedocles, ascribe to him, and his great historical merit is that it brings into closer and more intelligible interplay with the ideas of his predecessors, than does the *idee reçue*.

One, therefore, turns with an unusual and somewhat complicated sense of anticipation to M. R. Wright's new edition of the fragments, which has itself been in the making since the early 1960s. Perhaps unfairly, for the first task of an editor is not to speculate about his or her author but to present him as completely and economically to

the reader as possible. For example, anyone who consults an edition of Empedocles will want authoritative guidance on the poet's life (not to mention the sensational leap into Etna by which he is alleged to have met his death), his writings, and - a particularly tricky and extremely important question - the grounds for allocating particular fragments to one of his poems. Wright, in his introduction, does all this with a minimum of fuss. All this is rightly supplied by Mrs Wright. As for the fragments themselves, she presents each quotation with adequate context, listing of citations, and *apparatus criticus*, and in her commentary gives a translation together with brief but valuable discussion of the point the quoting author was making, as well as notes on Empedocles' verses. The notes follow the usual pattern in commentaries on classical texts. They contain much succinct information on language and usage, and references, which the editor never allows to obscure the main philosophical point of a text.

The careful labour necessary to produce such an edition of a poet whose results are so fragmentary, and whose results are so fragmentary, is considerable, as is the reader's gratitude. Mrs Wright includes only extracts believed to contain Empedocles' own words, unlike Diels-Kranz and Bollack, who provide (and in Bollack's case discuss) numerous reports of his views by other ancient authors. In this respect her edition (the only complete one written for the English-speaking reader) is less useful than theirs. On the other hand its utility is enhanced by excellent concordances, and indexes, including an especially good and complete *index verborum*.

In her ordering of the fragments Mrs Wright will command a good deal of broad assent, despite some controversial choices, of which the placing of Fr 35 after all the cosmological fragments (Fr 37-56) is the most importantly questionable. Her rationale for it, however, is based on an uncompromising defence of the *idee reçue* of Empedocles' cosmology, and will fail to satisfy many. This is not just because they will think her wrong (as I do myself). It is rather that the debate on the question revealed, if nothing else, how elusive is much of the evidence on which interpretation must rest, partly because

Empedocles' own modes of expression are ambiguous. Mrs Wright continues to make the most obscure and controversial text of all (Fr 173-5) sound plain sailing, in her introduction and commentary alike. She dispenses briskly with Fr 22, a crucial much disputed text, which she called "dash", and gives the reader no sense of the alternatives he needs to weigh, nor of the issues which turn upon his decision, but only dismissal of the confusions of other scholars. She rightly makes much of the support for the *idee reçue* may derive from Aristotle, but does not pause to let us wonder whether Aristotle might be mistaken, as Simplicius thought in one pertinent text misread by her (*Cael.* 528, 11-14; 530, 16-22). In sum, 1965 was a year when Empedocles came to dominate the philosophical scene because of acts of bloodshed or perjury, we are to understand this not as the consequence of freely chosen original sin, but as the inevitable fragmentation of primordial perfect mixture by the impersonal force of Strife. Men, insofar as they are divine spirits, are so because they are thinkers; and all thinkers are conceived of as fragments of the substance of a perfect divine thinker, in whom they will one day be united again.

Like other recent accounts, notably those of Jonathan Barnes in his *Presocratic Philosophers* (1979) and Kahn in the retrospectives (1971) to his notable essay of 1960, Mrs Wright decisively abandons the idea that Empedocles thought of such spirits as essentially incorporeal Cartesian consciousnesses. Her distinctive preoccupation is with the moral psychology and the physiology of the Spinozistic beings she takes Empedocles to be considering. She treats the objective physical necessities of his metaphysics and the personal "I" by which a fallen spirit recalls his identity as intelligibly compatible aspects of a single reality. If any well-behaved philosopher has yet said enough to make his sort of philosophical position intelligible, here, at any rate, is a theme which deserves to capture more philosophical attention than was attracted by this controversy of 1965.

Mrs Wright is at her best when exploring in her introduction some of the fundamental philosophical ideas

Sources of guidance

By George Parfitt

RICHARD S. PETERSON:

Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson

247pp. Yale University Press. £37.05.
0 300 02586 6

Almost 250 pages on Ben Jonson's poems of praise may not sound a lot of fun, certainly to such as Professor Adams, whose Jonson is a mixture of Falstaff and Gargantua. Moreover Richard Peterson is particularly concerned with the way in which Jonson's praising is articulated through imitation of the classics: ghosts of pedantic Jonson may be expected to walk again, restless in the scholarly night. In fact, however, to anyone seriously interested in Jonson and/or in methods of literary composition Peterson has written a fascinating book.

The basis of *Imitation and Praise* is narrow, the author concentrating on selected poems of praise and devoting complete chapters to the elegy on Shakespeare and the *Cary/Morison* ode. But Peterson is aware of the narrowness of his focus and knows that to separate the poems of praise from the rest of Jonson's work is artificial. More particularly, he understands that praise and satire are closely related in Jonson and that, at any given time, what he is doing in one genre is likely to be cognate with what he is doing in others. Through sensible cross-reference Peterson keeps a reader aware of such connections: his book is deep and narrow, but it suggests the breadth which it sensibly denies itself.

Peterson's book is a manifestation of the increasing interest in Jonson's poetry in recent years, and to some extent it is the full working out of the editorial and critical decisions and perceptions of other scholars (as the author himself acknowledges), but it is also a book which points forward. Peterson calls his book "a small beginning"; it is more than that, but part of its merit is that it does suggest "ways into the poems that will issue in further explorations".

Peterson is concerned to demonstrate that Jonson's praise is not mere flattery and that his imitation is not pedantry. His method necessarily involves showing in detail how a Jonson poem is built up and from what materials, and this gives the book a fairly dense texture; but Peterson writes clearly, with economy and enthusiasm. He draws on the work done by editors of Jonson's poems in identifying classical allusions and "transformations", and he adds to our awareness of these as well as valuably demonstrating Jonson's active use of tradition and metaphor (as distinct from arcane ornamentation). Anyone who may wonder how such an approach can add to an appreciation of Jonson's poems of praise would do well to read the chapter on the Shakespeare elegy, which ought to settle for ever the hash of those who see the tribute as grudging and mean-minded.

Peterson's Jonson is serious and witty, immensely energetic, learned and at the same time deeply concerned with the society in which he lived. Jonson's great effort was to bring his study of the past to bear on his analysis of the present. A traditionalist, he felt the past should provide "guides" rather than "commanders" (as so often, his own formula gives the best second of what he is up to). So Uvedale or the Koon embody the

virtues of plenitude and consistency which Jonson admired and can be seen as a living demonstration of the relevance of classical ethics; the past is a weight or responsibility, but it need not be a burden. In Bunyanesque terms, the past may provide the path to salvation, rather than being a load to be shed before salvation is possible.

There are two important areas which Peterson's achievement suggests might profitably be studied further. First, the matter of tradition. Peterson is rightly anxious to make the point that Jonson's sense of the past is "plastic" rather than inert. He claims that "The entrenched notion that many of the ideas treated in the poems are simply commonplace, combined with the frequent assumption that topoi are essentially static and unchanging entities, has militated against a recognition of the often exquisite specificity of Jonson's use of words, themes, and motifs" and his book is admirable in its demonstration of how Jonson "turns" that which he imitates. But the argument for continuity is conducted in terms of Jonson's use of classical formulations, and there is interesting further work to be done on the ways in which he "turns" classical positions in earlier and contemporary English thought and on how the native tradition had drawn into itself classical attitudes well before Jonson's birth. Jonson's position is less isolated from the native tradition than an unwary reader of Peterson might suspect.

The other area needing further development concerns Jonson's involvement with the welfare of his own society. His ethics are social and secular, rather than private or mystical. Unless the individual is "round within himself, and straight", he will be socially hollow and useless; the cultivation of the individual's ethical soundness is, for Jonson, admirable primarily because the health of society depends upon the health of the individuals who comprise it. It follows that a study of Jonson's strategies of praise should ideally include discussion of his relationship to his society. One of the regrettable, and slightly paradoxical consequences of Peterson's concentration on Jonson-the-man is a failure to look seriously at what his career and works have to tell us about the social and political situation of the time.

There are particular statements in the book which are questionable. It is, for example, an over-simplification to speak of Macro, in *Sejanus*, as being "pushed up" to replace Sejanus upon his fall since part of the play's tension comes from the fact that Macro is gradually "pushed up" before Sejanus's fall. It is similarly misleading to see Crites, in *Cynthia's Revels*, as simply a "foil to the shapeless Amorphus" and to discuss the womb/tomb nexus in the *Cary/Morison* ode without reference to the fact that this is a widely used Renaissance topos. The absence of bibliography is also puzzling and faintly irritating. But these are small points in a book which has been attractively produced and which is generally excellent in its scholarship.

Articles on American and British Literature: An Index to Selected Periodicals, 1950-1977 by Larry B. Corse and Sandra B. Corse has just been published (413pp. Swallow Press/Oliver University Press. £18.00 8040 0408 0). The volume lists critical articles on selected major writers in each of the national literatures according to a chronological plan, from *Beowulf* and Chaucer to the twentieth-century classics, and also includes a section on Commonwealth writers.

Though they cannot see the glittering Christmas tree, blind children dance around it, holding hands and singing. They have faith that Father Christmas will bring them another sackful of wonderful books printed in Braille.

LEGACIES, DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

are urgently needed and will be gratefully received by the Secretary.

NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND
FROM WELL RD, REDBURY, STOCKPORT SK6 2EG



Gulliver surprised while bathing by a young female Yahoo: one of the more than 400 illustrations by Grandville to a classic 1836 translation of Gulliver's Travels; they are reproduced in full in a new edition of the work (319pp. Great Ocean Publishers, 738 South 22nd Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202. \$37.50. 0 915556 06 5). Grandville, whose real name was Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard, was also noted for his illustrations to Don Quixote and La Fontaine's Fables; he died insane at the age of forty-four.

Stating the surmisable

By Peter Earle

F. BASTIAN:

Defoe's Early Life

378p. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 27432 6

Successive biographers of Daniel Defoe have always been uneasily aware that their work is going to be somewhat thin if they have to rely on facts which would be accepted by the average critical historian. Such evidence is particularly thin for the first forty-three years of his life from his birth in 1660 (the date is itself speculative) to that nadir of his career in 1703 when he was sentenced to the pillory and imprisonment in Newgate on a charge of seditious libel. The result is that all biographers have been forced to supplement their researches by extensive mining in Defoe's own huge output of over five hundred separate works, an oeuvre which is liberally sprinkled with hints, allusions and apparently autobiographical snippets.

F. Bastian has carried this method to its logical extreme and has managed to write a biography of three hundred pages covering just that period of Defoe's early life which is worst documented. The result, though clearly speculative, is on the whole convincing, even if one sometimes feels that the author is carried away by his own zeal for the hunt. He has a very sure touch for topographical detail and has made intelligent use of Defoe's famous *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-6) and his less known but very impressive *Atlas Maritimus and Commercialis* (1728). Both these works clearly embody material collected by Defoe in travels carried out many decades before their publication and Bastian has used them to piece together many admittedly hypothetical journeys made by Defoe over much of Western Europe and as far afield as the Orkneys. The method of reconstruction is intriguing. Unusually detailed descriptions of certain places in the *Tour* or the *Atlas* catch the detective's eye. Bastian's is then pieced together, often by reference to Defoe's novels and fictional travel stories. Thus Defoe's supposed visit to Italy in 1680 is reflected in the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720) for the journey south and in *Colonel Jack* (1722) for the way home. Internal evidence in these works often suggests a date for such a journey, a gap in Defoe's known movements provides the opportunity and, hey presto! another piece of the puzzle is in place. The method is extremely well thought out, though the surmisable is foreshadowed by the author in an early

could not have known about something or described it so well unless he had actually seen it for himself.

However, the works of Defoe, like the Bible, can always be plundered for both sides of an argument and Bastian must know as well as this reviewer the passage in *The Compleat English Gentleman* (published posthumously in 1890) where Defoe tells his gentleman reader that he does not have to travel himself to discover the world. "If he has not travell'd in his youth, has not made the grand tour of Italy and France, he may make the tour of the world in books..." Most writers on Defoe tend to take this observation seriously and spend much of their time making a tour of the literature of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in a search for the sources of Defoe's works. Bastian's tour is, for the most part, limited to Defoe's own works, which means that he often forgets an important part of a categorical statement which he makes near the beginning of his book. "Creative writing, of course, can never be spun out of thin air, but must always be a transmutation of the author's real or vicarious experience." Whether this is true is a matter for creative writers to decide but, if it is true, it is necessary to the possibility of vicarious as well as real experience to be considered in the process of sifting through Defoe's works.

The literary technique of moving fairly rapidly from the hypothetical to the definite which is apparent in Bastian's descriptions of Defoe's travels is matched by his exploration of the circle of Defoe's relatives, friends, partners and business associates. This is best illustrated in the development of the identity of "HF", the supposed author of *The Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), as Defoe's uncle Henry Foe - a vital identity for the treatment of much of Defoe's early life. On page 3, "the close correspondence... seems to require" such an identification. On page 10, the book "undoubtedly incorporates some real family history", while from page 11 onwards there is no further suggestion of hypothesis and Bastian can use his sound topographical knowledge of seventeenth-century London to develop an interesting descriptive piece on Defoe's childhood. The technique is repeated again and again in the book and whole networks of friends and acquaintances are built up from the identity of someone of that name in a political or similar source and the development of a genealogical, topographical background from which local histories and so on. The historian's instinctive suspicion of the method (the pitfalls are made very clear by recent demographic work on nominal linkage) have already been foreshadowed by the author in an early

disclaimer. "It may be objected, too, that what starts as a surmise sometimes ends up as a firm statement... While it is too much to hope to attain complete objectivity and eliminate inaccuracies entirely, perhaps these are the inevitable price of a picture which, while remaining substantially accurate, will be very much fuller than would otherwise be possible."

What can a reviewer do about an honest man? The fact is that Bastian's book is sufficiently convincing to make one think that it is substantially accurate and the result is that readers will now be able to learn much more about the early life of one of England's most enigmatic literary figures. They will learn about his childhood and education, his travels and his possible duel, his spiritual crisis, his varied and chequered business career. They will learn most of all about his involvement with King William III and the Whig leaders during the political and diplomatic crisis that followed the war with France in the 1690s. Much of this is new and very interesting, some of it based on Bastian's fresh attributions of a number of previously anonymous pamphlets to Defoe's pen. Such attributions may be convincing but they are certainly speculative like much of the rest of this biography and no reader should forget that Bastian's book is not a complete work of fiction, like some previous biographies of Defoe, but on the other hand it is much too hypothetical to be considered a work of totally acceptable fact.

Readers may also share this reviewer's feeling that, despite the author's industry and ingenuity, they still do not get to know the real Defoe, still do not understand what made this extraordinary man tick. Bastian considers many influences, including a shadowy mother and grandmother given hypothetical substance by inspired identifications from characters in Defoe's works. This is standard stuff for a biographer of Defoe and, although Bastian avoids the obvious pitfalls, he really takes us no nearer to a believable reality than his predecessors. This is mainly because such a reality is almost certainly impossible to recover, but it is also a reflection of Bastian's method of developing his subject's biography. His parade of people who might have been related to Defoe or who might have known him, his imaginative reconstruction of places which Defoe might have visited, things he might have done and sights he might have seen, is impressive, reasonably convincing and certainly interesting; but these allusive glimpses into an undocumented life make us lose our focus on the subject of the biography. We learn more about the people whom Defoe might have known than we learn about Defoe himself.

The tactics of terror

By Robert Conquest

GEORGE LEGGETT:

The Cheka

Lenin's Political Police
512pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £22.50.
0 19 822552 0

There can be few who have anything but distaste for the Soviet Union as it is today; even fewer who look back with admiration on the Stalin period. When it comes to the earlier years of the regime, however, distance seems to lend a certain enchantment. Unesco not long ago sponsored a much-advertised seminar on Lenin the Humanist; it could scarcely have got away with such an exercise if Stalin or Brezhnev had been the subject.

Yet this is the Lenin who in the 1880s was writing of famine relief, "Psychologically this talk of feeding the starving is nothing but an expression of the saccharine-sweet sentimentality so characteristic of our intelligentsia", and in 1918, after the victory, was telling his more squeamish followers, "When we are reproached with cruelty, we wonder how people can forget the most elementary Marxism".

This was understood in the West at the time even by its progressive intelligentsia, for whom the October Revolution and the new Bolshevik state had little attraction: the disturbing day-to-day events in Russia could not be concealed, and it was known that Lenin's rule had been rejected by the bulk of the country's own liberal intelligentsia; the millions of refugees, too, made a bad impression. Bertrand Russell, after his meeting with Lenin, spoke in such terms as "his guffaw at the thought of those massacred made my blood run cold" and "my most vivid impressions were of bigotry and Mongolian cruelty". The latter observation recalling Rosa Luxemburg's earlier charge of "Tartar-Mongolian savagery" against the Bolsheviks. The point was taken, too, by most Russian socialists, and even by old friends of Lenin like Maxim Gorky, who kept up a barrage of attacks, until his paper was suppressed, on what he called "an autocracy of savages" ruling "by threats of starvation and massacre".

Today, however, there is a tendency - less marked perhaps than a few years ago - to think of Lenin's Russia as a pure experiment which was spoiled by his successors. Somewhere in that strange personality and those fiery events, nostalgic progressives seek and find an image of socialist integrity, with the Old Bolsheviks seen as exemplars of revolutionary purity, agree with them or not. Yet Lenin's old Party was full of villainous characters like Stalin, Kaganovich, Yagoda, Mekhlis, Shkriyakov, Ulrikh and Kedrov, who were to prove every bit as evil as the Eichmanns and Heydrichs who were in fact their imitators.

It is no doubt both common and natural for Utopians to project their fantasies into the spatial or temporal distance. This was not true, however, of the Anarchists, who from Makhno were sceptical of the idea that the all-powerful Bolshevik State, however "proletarian", was the means for creating a juster social order. In the end, the Utopians of the Left were fortified by Bakunin's common-sense view that "those previous workers having just become rulers or representatives of the people will cease being workers; they will look at the workers from their heights, they will represent not the people but themselves... He who doubts it does not know human nature." Add to this Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of the Lenin-Trotsky regime that the crushing of a free press and the end of free elections must lead to bureaucracy, despotism and terror, and the whole of the Leninist, Stalinist, or deception, is prefigured.

Because the Bolshevik Party took power in a state where the social structure did not conform to accepted criteria for a Marxist takeover, the absence of the condi-

tions for "socialism" could only be compensated for by force. As Pyatakov, one of Lenin's favourite disciples, was to say, "Lenin was the man who had the courage to make a proletarian revolution first and then to set about creating the objective conditions theoretically necessary as a preliminary to such a revolution". Thus, "according to Lenin, the Communist Party is based on the principle of coercion, which doesn't recognize any limitations or inhibitions."

This is all very well, as far as conscious motive and rationalization are concerned. But at a deeper level one can surely see in such theorizing precisely the "false consciousness" which Marxism attributes to other ideologies. As Orwell put it, the Russian Communists "never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal", but their true motive was power: "power is not a means, it is an end".

It seems unlikely that Marxist interpretations of the October Revolution, though still found in attenuated or contorted form in some circles, will be of much further use to historians. The more fruitful approach seems to me to lie in the special characteristics of Russia on the one hand, and the nature of chieftainic sects on the other. As Russell saw, Lenin did not much resemble a Western reformer. The real prototypes of the Bolshevik mentality are to be sought, rather, in Thomas Verner or John of Leiden. This is brought out by Norman Cohn in the later editions of his magnificent *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, where he points out that the Communists, like the Nazis, "have been inspired by fantasies which are downright medieval". The Bolshevik leadership, Cohn notes, "like in its social situation and the crudity and narrowness of its thinking, strikingly recalls the prophetic medieval Europe".

The factor common to all these chieftainic movements, Cohn adds, was that they envisaged the coming society "as a state of total communism, a society wholly unanimous in its beliefs and wholly free from inner conflict". In the struggle to achieve this, each formed, and felt entitled to form, "a restlessly dynamic and utterly ruthless group which, obsessed by the apocalyptic fantasy and filled with the conviction of its own infallibility, set itself infinitely above the rest of humanity and recognised no claim save that of its own mission". The difference between messianic revolutionaries of different periods lay in the striking, but ultimately superficial, phraseology in which they couched their beliefs. In each case they employed the most advanced intellectual dialect of the time - in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Theology, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Science. The deeper structure of the belief remained much the same.

Russia was uniquely suited to sectarian takeover. Even Engels had conceded that a Blanqui-type coup in the capital - undesirable elsewhere - might be the way to a Russian revolution, owing to the extreme concentration of its apparatus of government. Even in early Tsarist times bizarre decrees could take months to reach outlying districts, but would then be rigorously enforced to the letter. Once a regime achieved power or the huge size of the country, far from being a disintegrative factor, tended to neutralize, or soak up, local dissent, as it does to this day: while the riots in Gdansk were known throughout Poland and the rest of the world within hours, the riots in Novocherkassk were muffled to mere rumour for weeks and months.

Nothing is more astonishing than the docility with which, for the time being at least, the country accepted in 1917 the decision of a few thousand armed men in Petrograd. Indeed, after the transfer of power

to Moscow, the vulnerability of a Russian regime to a blow at its centre is strikingly illustrated in the Left Socialist Revolutionary rising of July 1918, to which Dr Leggett devotes a fascinating chapter. The rising, ill-prepared and without very clear aims, nearly overthrew the Bolsheviks. The Left SRs deployed only about 2,000 armed men, and were opposed by an even smaller force, mainly of the Bolsheviks' Latvian mercenaries, since the Russian regiments as the Bolshevik Command-in-Chief Vasetski tells us in his memoirs, remained neutral.

From the centre a continual effort of repression was needed. The Terror was Lenin's ewe-lamb, far exceeding anything to be found in Marxist revolutionary theory. Though Marx and Engels often cut their teeth for ruthless measures and praised the Jacobins, Engels in fact wrote to his partner that "the blame for the Reign of Terror in 1793 lies almost exclusively with the over-nervous bourgeois demeaning himself as a patriot, the petty bourgeois crapping their pants, and the mob of riff-raff who know how to profit from terror". Lenin, on the other hand, spoke as early as 1908 of the Jacobin Terror as simply the best thing about the French Revolution, and urged the Bolsheviks' misunderstanding and misreading of the peasant problem (an ideological albatross which hangs round the Soviet neck to this day). Lenin had originally planned a transition stage of "temporary alliance with the whole peasantry" before launching into full "socialism", but in May 1918 he decided that this stage was over. During the next few years, as he was to put it, the Bolshevik government "sought to obtain a sufficient quantity of grain from the peasants by way of requisition, then appropriation, and finally, and thus to obtain Communist production and distribution". This was effected by sending armed squads of urban Communists into the countryside, but a Marxist political manoeuvre was also envisaged, in that an alliance was now sought with the "village poor", or "rural proletariat". Class war was to be ignited in the villages. In fact, the village proletariat was not a coherent or productive class as the true proletariat might claim to be, but little more than a lumpenproletarian stratum which, however deserving of sympathy from non-Marxists, was totally unfit to play the pseudo-Marxist role now thrust on it. The result of this head-on assault was 245 peasant risings in 1918, and ninety-nine in about a third of Bolshevik territory in

1919: culminating in the major rebellions of Antonov and Makhno which swept whole provinces and needed ruthless intervention over months by the Cheka and the Army. A further result was the dreadful famine of 1921, of which the best that can be said is that at least it was not consciously inflicted like the worse famine ten years later, which finally broke the back of the free peasantry, and with it of Russian agriculture.

The Revolution which had promised peace, bread and land thus produced instead civil war, famine and (after a few years) the serfdom of collectivization. The Russian dead in the First World War amounted to rather less than two million. If Russia had fought on, perhaps losing another million in battle, that would still compare favourably with the death toll of the Civil War, the Terror and the famines and epidemics which resulted from Lenin's policies: an excess mortality, on Soviet statistics, of not less than 14 million up to 1922.

George Leggett has produced not only an indispensable history of the Cheka considered as an institution, but also a history of the struggles to retain power as seen from the point of view of the organs of power - the clearest of all the possible perspectives on the essential issues of the period which marked the foundation of the Soviet State. As to the end product, the Stalin and post-Stalin order was either the natural result of Leninism, or else it was an unforeseen aberration. If it were the former, the case against Lenin rests. If the latter, he is shown to have submitted the country to a murderous ordeal on the basis of a dogma which proved defective. Either way, the events described in Dr Leggett's book were crucial - a point which the Cheka's present embodiment, the KGB, is proud to confirm in its historical publications.

Union Soviétique de Lénine à Staline by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, Professor of Political Science at the University of Paris, first published in 1979, has now appeared in an English translation by Valence Ionescu. Volume 1, *Lenin: Revolution and Power* (279pp. Longmans, Paperback, £4.95, 0 582 29559 5) covers the rise of Bolshevism, the civil war, the NEP and the power struggle after Lenin's death. Volume 2, *Stalin: Order through Terror* (269pp. Longmans, Paperback, £4.95, 0 582 29560 5) deals with such topics as the "instrumental State" and the "Great Patriotic War". The bibliography covers original and secondary sources.

Vita Sanctae Coletae 1381-1447

The Miniatures of the Manuscript belonging to the Convent of the Colettine Poor Clares in Ghent

Prolegomenis auxerunt YVES CAZAUX, JOHAN DECAVELLE, ALBERT DIEROLEZ, C. VAN CORSTANJE

The biography of St. Colette of Corbie (1381-1447), the reformer of the Franciscan order of the Poor Clares, was written after her death by her confessor, Pierre de Vaux. The late fifteenth-century copy of this biography in the possession of the Ghent convent of the Poor Clares is an exceptionally fine and well-preserved work. It contains 30 coloured miniatures depicting scenes from the life of the saint, together with page borderings of flowers and animal motifs.

To coincide with the sixcentennial of St. Colette's birth a four-colour reproduction is being published of all miniatures of the Ghent manuscript. A four-part introduction is provided by a team of scholars and notes for the reader accompany the reproductions.

284 pp., 32 facsimile plates in full colour.
29.7 x 25.7 cm. Text in French, English, German, Dutch and Spanish.
Cloth bound. Gld. 160.-
ISBN 90 04 06565 2 December

E. J. Brill - 41 Museum Street - London WC1A 1LX

commentary

The drama of justice . . .

By Oswyn Murray

The Oresteia
Oliver Theatre

The new version of the *Oresteia* at the National Theatre is the most important theatrical event for many years, and the best account of any Greek play that I have seen. It demonstrates that it is not necessary to modernize and bowdlerize Greek myth in order to make it acceptable to a contemporary audience, and consequently exposes the flabbiness and cowardice behind (for instance) the RSC's recent attempt to produce a *Reader's Digest* version of the Greeks. This production is the classic account for our generation of the *Oresteia*, against which we must judge all attempts to stage ancient tragedy.

The National Theatre's triumph rests on two foundations. The first is the acceptance of Greek tragedy as a ritual event: the aim of Peter Hall's production is to persuade us into believing in and partaking of this ritual. It is primarily this purpose that the masking of the actors and the use of men to portray all the characters serve; the effect, erroneously called alienation, is to cause us to see beyond the individual situation to the universal it embodies. In such a conception of tragedy the chorus ceases to be a problem: it is our comment on the meaning of the events we witness, and on our unavailing desires to change or avert what can only be exorcized by the ritual we are undergoing. This interpretation of the *Oresteia* is correct; but the achievement of causing it to be accepted by a modern audience is almost miraculous. At the end of the trilogy, after five hours of theatre, the Furies are tamed and led off to their new home in Attica as the Kind Ones, through the audience. The chorus calls on us to stand: "Silence while the Kind Ones pass; now echo our chorus, raise your own cry." Suddenly we realize that we have accepted this experience: we are the believers, the people of Athens witnessing the birth of a new cult, as the procession passes through our midst.

The second foundation of this production is the magnificent translation by Tony Harrison, surely the best acting translation of Aeschylus ever written (120pp. Rex Collings. £3.50. 086036 178 0). It gives the impression of catching every image and every nuance of meaning that is dramatically significant, while recreating Aeschylus' traditional grandeur and sonority. The sense of the language is both simple and dense, relying heavily on the consonantal strength of English and its richness in gutturals and jingles.

Father, father, do you know, / kept him down by death, / what can go through your grave-gloom / unbreached by light or breath?

What words can worm their way / through the sour soil of sorrow / what words of bright day / burrow your dark sorrow?

From all the bloodstained grave-rings / they buried and blocked your bones, / never building, held by night's / death-heavy anchorages.

put on records (as surely as it should be presented on radio), before it leaves the National Theatre repertoire.

The restraint of Peter Hall is the more surprising, since Aeschylus is the most theatrical of the Greek tragedians, a director's gift. His choruses are enmeshed in the action, demanding almost the treatment of a tableau; in imagery and dramatic technique he is an artist of the visual. Peter Hall knows how to make a visual point: for instance the attitudes of Orestes and Pylades in the *Choephoroi* reflect the archaic smile of their masks, so that we seem to see the Greek statues of the Acropolis jerking into life. But the hallmark of this production is its restraint in visual terms: this has the remarkable effect of redirecting attention within the trilogy. We are used to regarding the *Agamemnon* as the most successful play, the *Eumenides* as ritually important but dramatically impossible, and acceptable only as a sort of intellectual Hegelian synthesis of bloodguilt. The *Choephoroi* merely links the two.

In this production it is the *Agamemnon* which suffers: the great scenes which it is composed of are subordinated to the dramatic thrust of the trilogy as a whole, and not allowed to usurp our attention. Contrast that much neglected play, the *Choephoroi*, becomes the great dramatic moment of the trilogy, exhibiting a psychological and a poetic force which will be a revelation to all who see it. The most powerful single scene in the trilogy is in fact the lamentation of the Trojan slaves at the grave of their murdered conqueror, Agamemnon, and the recognition scene of Orestes and Electra. One begins to see why that scene was so important to the Greeks, why it was copied by Sophocles and parodied by Euripides. Thus the *Choephoroi* emerges as a play of uniquely consistent mood and intensity; the result is to place the final play, the *Eumenides*, in its proper perspective, as a genuine reconciliation of genuine conflicts.

Treated like this, with respect as a work of art which has the right to make its own meaning clear, and for which the director must merely make sure that each part is given its proper voice, without imposing his own superfluous unity of interpretation, the trilogy reveals its significance as a plurality of insights into a single problem, the origins and the basis of civilization.

What Earth breeds is appalling. / Monsters rock in the arms of the sea. / Fearful sky-lanes flare and fell / through terrible void territory.

Monsters, meteors, sea, soil, space, / things that fly, creep, crawl, / of all these horrors the human race / is the terror that tops them all.

Or as Sophocles put it, deliberately echoing Aeschylus, "Wonders are many on earth, and the greatest of these is man."

To us the events in Greek tragedy are myths, to the Greeks they were real. Historically speaking, the Greeks are right: we do not know what they knew about the origins of their world which is ours; we do not worship at the old chamber-tombs, when we discover them we strip them from our museums. Occasionally, our complicity is jolted, as it was this spring, after a local school-master in Euboea hired a bulldozer to bank holiday to remove illegally a treasure mound of earth; he is now in prison. What he found was a tomb of the early ninth century BC, the earliest major monument in Greece, by more than two hundred years, exactly at the turning point of the Dark Age which separates the prehistoric world from the age of classical Greece. A half a mile away, a road and surrounded by a stone wall, with at its centre a grave cut in the floor, the ashes of a man in an

urn, with his burial shroud neatly folded in its neck; beside him a female skeleton burdened with gold ornaments, buried with her man and at the same time; beside her, a knife; elsewhere the royal horses burned on a pyre. For the first time we had clear archaeological evidence of what the Greeks had always known, the necessity for ritual murder in Greece in that heroic age which stands on the threshold of history. The world of Aeschylus was born from such ritual murders, and the *Oresteia* is about the purification of religion and society from the taint



Head of Hera, from Olympia, c 500 BC; one of 170 illustrations in John Barron's *An Introduction to Greek Sculpture*, just published (176pp. Athlone Press. £15 hardback 0 485 11196 9; £3.95 paperback 0 485 12033 X).

. . . and its music

By Paul Driver

The *Oresteia* is almost as much a fulfilment for the composer, Harrison Birtwistle, as it is for Peter Hall and Tony Harrison (and probably for Denis Lasdun too). Birtwistle's contribution is important not only because music runs almost continuously throughout the three presentations, but also because a passionate appetite for the Greek drama and interest in all aspects of Greek culture have informed his purely musical works since his "Refrains and Choruses" for wind quintet of 1957. "Tragoedia" of 1965 actually takes on, as the title might indicate, the formal divisions of Greek play: prologue, parados, episode, antistrophe, stasimon, and so on, in a powerful symmetrical arrangement. The opera *Punch and Judy* (1967) develops the manner of "Tragoedia" into a violent parody of Aristophanic comedy, complete with its own chorus.

Then there are his "A Interludes from a Tragedy" (1970) for clarinet and pre-recorded tape, and the "dramatic pastoral" *Down by the Greenwood Side* (1969), which is derived from a mummer's play but whose garish and masked dramatic style, as well as its language and musical mood, offer perhaps the nearest parallel to the present production of the *Oresteia*. Birtwistle's responses to the Greeks is not just a matter of form and manner, though. The content of Greek mythology and especially the implications for a radically-minded composer of the ancient myth have been an obsessive concern. A series of works on the theme of Orpheus culminates in the just-completed, long-awaited grand opera, *The Mask of Orpheus*, where the significance of the myth is most poignant for it allows Birtwistle to do the radical thing he is always inclined to - building his edifice on the forbidden question of the medium: Why sing at all?

Birtwistle recently explained that it is similarly the radical, "modern" aspect of Greek civilization itself that attracts him: the newly, abruptly established city-state whose foundation is depicted in the *Eumenides* and whose challenge to invent everything afresh, once its primitive roots have been severed, resembles the challenge of our contemporary modernism. Birtwistle protests that he likewise has had to invent everything in his musical language from scratch. The highly-wrought simplicity of his best scores - their (very Greek) combination of extremes of brutality and lyricism - attests to the fact.

of hereditary bloodguilt. It is permeated with that instinctive fear which caused those who enacted the rituals on Euboea and erected that great monument, suddenly as soon as it was finished to panic, to break down the roof, construct ramps around the building, and cover it with a huge mound.

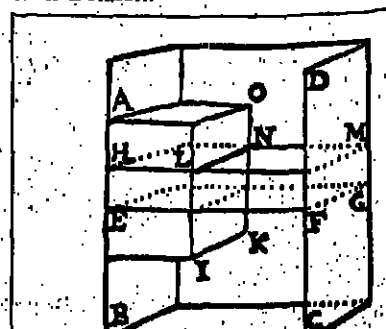
The *Oresteia* is also itself history, a tragedy in time, performed in 458 BC. It is deeply committed politically: it relates archetypal patterns of justice to a new democratic order of society, established in a revolution three years earlier. That revolution took justice from the nobility and gave it to the people's courts, keeping back only murder trials: Aeschylus argues that this and this alone is the proper function of the aristocratic court. The murder of Agamemnon is a modern event: it is the murder three years earlier of the democratic leader, Ephialtes, from which contemporary bloodguilt the Athenians are ritually exorcized in the trilogy. The picture of Agamemnon is influenced by the figure of Athens's great general, Cimón, who for thirteen years had laboured to create the Athenian empire, and came back to a city which no longer wanted him, and drove him into exile: there is much about the hardships of the ordinary soldier on campaign. Aeschylus even seeks to offer mythic justification for a new alliance with Argos, traitor to Greece, against Athens's fellow victor in the Persian War, Sparta. These resonances were immediately available to Aeschylus's audience, and even today explain the revolutionary power of the trilogy; they also serve

to show how Aeschylus' concern with the roots of justice stems from a deep political commitment.

But essentially the *Oresteia* is about the birth of the social order. By reflecting his own historical moment through the mirror of myth, Aeschylus reveals the tensions in all forms of social organization. His trilogy is therefore about bloodguilt, vendetta, clan loyalty against the city, about the origins of justice in retribution, about the fragility of all attempts at order. It is also, as the programme insists too much, about that modern myth, what Engels called "the historical defeat of the female sex", the transition from the old world of patriarchy to the new world of male domination. We may know as a fact that the institution of patriarchy never existed in history; but the myth of patriarchy remains essential for us to externalize in history the biological tensions which necessarily threaten society. This production of the *Oresteia* succeeds in demonstrating the truth of the old and often ridiculed Marxist interpretation of the *Oresteia*. Nature, the mother-right to avenge her daughter's sacrifice, to call down the Furies on the son who murders her, stands in conflict with culture, and the demands of the state, the war effort, and ultimately the whole structure of justice and the social order. The compromise between these two forces in the final play is not time-bound, but a compromise basic to the existence of any form of social order. The world of Aeschylus is our world; perhaps we should remember that it is only a hundred generations since Homer lived.

"Tragoedia" and "Silbury Air". The clarinets make more detailed commentary on the action, and form the substance of the occasional tutis and the accompaniment for the few choral songs.

The three bass-clarinets together often recall the writing of "Nenia". The three baroque clarinets in unison, unforgettably strident, are like nothing else. The clarinet scream which tokens the appearance of the Furies to Orestes is a wonderful gesture. The musical activity is non-stop but layered and regulated with superb restraint. Except for some atmospheric effects on tape and an amusingly grotesque waltz for the chorus of Furies it rarely stoops to illustration. It is an abstract construction, gleefully newfangled yet craggy and raw. It is excellently performed under the direction of Malcolm Bennett.



Galileo's first book on physics was published in 1632, but surprisingly, has not been translated into English since the 17th century. Drake's version of the book is found no less controversial by specialists, no less entertaining by the lay reader. The whole of Galileo's *Bodies* is included, with a new introduction by Drake. This new conversation among three people, Galileo, Drake, and the reader, is a masterpiece of dialogue. - Sagredo, Simplicio, and Salviati - uses criticisms and comments based on actual documents and books of the time. Published December 1981, £14.00.

The University of Chicago Press
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD

CAUSE, EXPERIMENT, AND SCIENCE
A new dialogue incorporating a new English translation of Galileo's "Two New Sciences" by J. M. Drake
by J. M. Drake

Galileo's first book on physics was published in 1632, but surprisingly, has not been translated into English since the 17th century. Drake's version of the book is found no less controversial by specialists, no less entertaining by the lay reader. The whole of Galileo's *Bodies* is included, with a new introduction by Drake. This new conversation among three people, Galileo, Drake, and the reader, is a masterpiece of dialogue. - Sagredo, Simplicio, and Salviati - uses criticisms and comments based on actual documents and books of the time. Published December 1981, £14.00.

Valedictions and reconciliations

By Peter Conrad

Alceste
Covent Garden

It's sadly fitting that Janet Baker should have chosen two works by Gluck - currently *Alceste* at Covent Garden, in the summer *Orfeo* at Glyndebourne - for her operatic valediction, because the works themselves, like all neoclassical art, are elegiac essays in regret and mournful leave-taking. *Alceste* volunteers to die to relieve her husband Admetus; *Orfeo*, reckless with grief, ventures into the underworld to reclaim Eurydice. Their missions beyond life initiate them into the post-mortem condition of chastened resignation which is the ideal of neo-classicism, and which is imaged in its statuary - the serene and tranquil divinities described by Winckelmann, or the Pauline Borghese of Canova whose flesh is sensual but chilled - because statues are the resurrected perfection of human beings, and have been made perfect by the bleeding away of perishable organic life. This is why a romantic hero like Don Giovanni, for whom the proof of reality is bodily sensation, is so imperilled by a statue; but it's the ambition of Gluck's people to stiffen into monuments, and one of the finest images in John Copley's production at Covent Garden poses Janet Baker, defiantly invoking the ministers of death, on a plinth over the prompt box which is lined up with the massive idol of Apollo behind her, whose solemn marble imperturbability she will, once she has died, come to share.

Gluck's art is in every sense grave: the gravity of its musical idiom derives - in arias like *Alceste*'s "Divinités du Styx" or *Orfeo*'s "che far senza Euridice?", helplessly repeating itself because immobilized in despair, or *Orfeo*'s plea for her own death, "O toi qui prolonges mes jours" - from the funeral nature of the emotions of his characters and their reverent longing for a quietus. Neoclassicism is necessarily morbid, since it's an art which depends on the robbing of graves (in the excavations at Herculaneum) and on the misery of lamenting a lost and irretrievable past. The neoclassical artist, like Gluck's *Alceste* or *Orfeo*, is someone who conducts a rite of interment, and his triumph, like theirs in bringing back their spouses from death, is one of exhumation.

Janet Baker, as expected, heroically matches the challenge she has set herself. Her dramatic gift - except in that vituperative portrayal of Mozart's Vitellia - has always been for suffering calm and sacrificial composure. Her impersonations of Monteverdi's Penelope, Donizetti's

Maria Stuarda and Holst's Savitri (another wife who rescues her husband from premature death) were all commentaries on this abiding state. From oratorio she has learnt a reflective stillness, and on stage she's moving precisely because of her own restrained refusal to move. This steadfastness makes a moral icon of her, an image of trusting fidelity, not patience sitting on a monument but patience implacably growing into a monument. Such was the distinction of her fixed and unfaltering Penelope, and the same conviction enables her *Alceste*. Oratorio has also taught her an impersonality which is right for Gluck: her voice in *The*



"Leda and the Swan", from an exhibition of works on paper by Duncan Grant at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery.

Calf love

By Eric Korn

84 Charing Cross Road
Ambassadors Theatre

There are, it must be clearly stated, excellent second-hand bookshops in New York City. So it was not need but sentiment that drove Helen Hanft, journeyman-scriptwriter by profession but balletist by avocation, to write from her cold brownstone apartment in the upper fifties or wherever, to the now-long-defunct bookshop of Marks and Co in the Charing Cross Road, with her wants of Hazlitt and Johnson and Lander and De Quincey: "England seems a lot nearer than 17th St."

Ms Hanft, it must also be said, is the kind of person who keeps carbon copies of her letters. With time on her hands, and without an image of the recipient's face to restrain her, her letters soon passed the bounds of normal business decorum; she chattered on with a gossipy shrewdness about her finances and her neighbours, with a sort of swoony, our-hearts-are-young-and-gay gush about what her favourite authors meant to her; she itemized the shortcomings of editors, chided the bookseller for not being prompt or ingenious or industrious or enough; in general, behaved with the characteristic monomaniacal absorption of your average booklover who thinks that the bookseller exists for the customer's comfort and convenience.

How Marks and Co felt about all this is not recorded; but any objections they might have had were quenched by Helen Hanft's unquenchableness, no doubt aided by her well-timed gifts of ham and eggs and nylons at any rate, one member of the firm undertook replies of gradually diminishing stiffness, and a correspondence began that lasted for twenty years, from 1949 to 1969.

It was sporadic at best. So far

Dream of Gerontius or *Das Lied von der Erde* doesn't belong to an individual but exults or implores on behalf of the whole human race; likewise the tragic courage of *Alceste* - and the quality which makes her neoclassically statuesque - is her capacity to resist the persuasion of personal emotion and to renounce Admetus in order to save him. Even with transpositions, Gluck's writing tests and frays Janet Baker's voice, but she has the rare art of justifying vocal uncertainty as dramatic distress. You never think the singer has been overplayed; rather it's the character who has been urged beyond emotional endurance.

You worry not because Janet Baker may not reach her next high note but because *Alceste* may not be equal to the next moral extremity.

The production mounted for her is a nice demonstration of the relativity of neoclassicism, or the variety of neoclassicisms. Each age has its own version of the past, but Roger Butlin's sets compound and collate the different versions: some of the chorus, masked and ranked in tiers, belong to the Greek tragic amphitheatre, but others are garbed in the flimsy Grecian cocktail dresses favoured by Alma-Tadema; Admetus's palace is a cool museum courtyard like the room containing the Elgin marbles, but its imposition of order doesn't extend far, and where the classical world ends the romantic one murky and sublimely begins - at the perimeter of this safe colonized region is the underworld *Alceste* confronts, a rather nothingness of withered trees and drifting fogs.

The problem with *Alceste*, which the Covent Garden production has mitigated but not altogether avoided, is that the work doesn't remain true to its own neoclassical logic. Instead of freezing the heroine into a statue, mortifying life and thus transcending it as neoclassical marble does, it permits a bolsterous Hercules to rout the Furies and restores her to Admetus, commissioning a flippant ballet (since the French version of the score is being used) to celebrate this trivialized reconciliation. Until this happens, John Copley's production is redempt and sternly symmetrical; but the lapse into comedy permits him to trot out some of those kitschy scenic tricks and decorative trinkets for which he's famous - crowns of gold plastic for *Alceste* and Admetus to wear to the ballet, and an apotheosis for Apollo which looks like a Selridge's Christmas tableau gone incongruously Greek.

From this unpromising material James Roome-Evans has cunningly constructed an evening of considerable charm and enjoyment. His stage adaptation of *84 Charing Cross Road*, at the Ambassadors Theatre in London - about as close as you can get to the hallowed spot - plainly delighted the audience, and even when you discount the coo-chuckles at foreigners saying nice things about the British (or even at foreigners saying anything about the British, or indeed at foreigners saying anything) that still leaves a lot of sharp lines, sharply performed.

The piece is essentially a two-hander, and though the pace is usefully diversified by various interpolations from a sort of chorus of packers, catalogues, and secretaries (that wretched tribe that used to be detected by the bookseller exists for the customer's comfort and convenience). How Marks and Co felt about all this is not recorded; but any objections they might have had were quenched by Helen Hanft's unquenchableness, no doubt aided by her well-timed gifts of ham and eggs and nylons at any rate, one member of the firm undertook replies of gradually diminishing stiffness, and a correspondence began that lasted for twenty years, from 1949 to 1969.

It was sporadic at best. So far

because Janet Baker may not reach her next high note but because *Alceste* may not be equal to the next moral extremity.

The production mounted for her is a nice demonstration of the relativity of neoclassicism, or the variety of neoclassicisms. Each age has its own version of the past, but Roger Butlin's sets compound and collate the different versions: some of the chorus, masked and ranked in tiers, belong to the Greek tragic amphitheatre, but others are garbed in the flimsy Grecian cocktail dresses favoured by Alma-Tadema; Admetus's palace is a cool museum courtyard like the room containing the Elgin marbles, but its imposition of order doesn't extend far, and where the classical world ends the romantic one murky and sublimely begins - at the perimeter of this safe colonized region is the underworld *Alceste* confronts, a rather nothingness of withered trees and drifting fogs.

The problem with *Alceste*, which the Covent Garden production has mitigated but not altogether avoided, is that the work doesn't remain true to its own neoclassical logic. Instead of freezing the heroine into a statue, mortifying life and thus transcending it as neoclassical marble does, it permits a bolsterous Hercules to rout the Furies and restores her to Admetus, commissioning a flippant ballet (since the French version of the score is being used) to celebrate this trivialized reconciliation. Until this happens, John Copley's production is redempt and sternly symmetrical; but the lapse into comedy permits him to trot out some of those kitschy scenic tricks and decorative trinkets for which he's famous - crowns of gold plastic for *Alceste* and Admetus to wear to the ballet, and an apotheosis for Apollo which looks like a Selridge's Christmas tableau gone incongruously Greek.

From this unpromising material James Roome-Evans has cunningly constructed an evening of considerable charm and enjoyment. His stage adaptation of *84 Charing Cross Road*, at the Ambassadors Theatre in London - about as close as you can get to the hallowed spot - plainly delighted the audience, and even when you discount the coo-chuckles at foreigners saying nice things about the British (or even at foreigners saying anything about the British, or indeed at foreigners saying anything) that still leaves a lot of sharp lines, sharply performed.

The piece is essentially a two-hander, and though the pace is usefully diversified by various interpolations from a sort of chorus of packers, catalogues, and secretaries (that wretched tribe that used to be detected by the bookseller exists for the customer's comfort and convenience). How Marks and Co felt about all this is not recorded; but any objections they might have had were quenched by Helen Hanft's unquenchableness, no doubt aided by her well-timed gifts of ham and eggs and nylons at any rate, one member of the firm undertook replies of gradually diminishing stiffness, and a correspondence began that lasted for twenty years, from 1949 to 1969.

It was sporadic at best. So far

New Oxford books: Reference

The Dictionary of National Biography 1961-1970

Edited by E. T. Williams and C. S. Nicholls

'The DNB is one of our greatest and most indispensable reference books.' Geoffrey Wheatcroft in the *Sunday Telegraph*. 'It is a splendid addition to an already vast national treasure for which the editors deserve the fullest measure of praise.' Sir John Colville in the *Daily Telegraph*. £40.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Based on the new edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, published in 1979, the second edition of *COQ* has been completely revised and redesigned. With its 1,100 authors spanning nearly 3,000 years, close on 6,000 quotations, and 25,000 index entries, it surely has no serious rival among comparable volumes. Second edition £7.50 *Oxford Paperbacks* £2.95

The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Art

Edited by Harold Osborne

This new Companion deals with the artists, ideas, movements, and trends of painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts up to the mid 1970s. It is a work for study and reference at every level, and provides the general reader with material for an informed understanding of the art of our time. 128 pages of plates (84 pages in colour) £19.50

The Pocket Oxford English-Russian Dictionary

Compiled by Nigel Rankin and Della Thompson

This companion volume to *The Pocket Oxford Russian-English Dictionary* (1978) is likewise designed primarily for English-speaking users who do not have an advanced knowledge of Russian. It provides Russian translations for an English vocabulary of nearly 30,000 words in the general: technical, colloquial, and idiomatic areas of the language. £4.95

The Pocket Oxford Russian-English Dictionary

Compiled by Jessie Coulson, Nigel Rankin, and Della Thompson

In this concise dictionary of current Russian and English the volume announced above is combined with its companion *Russian-English Dictionary* to make a useful reference book for learners of Russian and visitors to the USSR. £5.95

Oxford University Press

All-weather artist

By Christopher White

Jacob van Ruisdael
Mauritshuis, The Hague

To celebrate the third centenary of Jacob van Ruisdael's death, a major exhibition has been arranged by the Mauritshuis in The Hague, where it can be seen until January 3. (From January 13 until April 11 it will be on show at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts). It is accompanied by two publications, a generously illustrated scholarly catalogue by Seymour Slive and an album of excellent illustrations.

The exhibition establishes not only Ruisdael's stature as one of the leading Dutch landscape artists in his own century, but also, at least to the English visitor, his impact on landscape painting in Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In their different ways Gainsborough, Constable, Turner and a number of lesser artists particularly from the Norwich school were indebted to his example, whether in mood, subject or form, and it is appropriate that a panel at the beginning of the exhibition should boldly display Constable's touching tribute to Ruisdael's art: it haunts my mind and clings to my heart.

Seymour Slive points out that if the sale of postcards is an accurate guide to public taste, after Rembrandt's "Night Watch" and Vermeer's "View of Delft", Ruisdael's "Windmill at Wijk" is the most popular picture in the Dutch museums. It is probably true that in the popular mind Ruisdael's art is generally associated with windmills, but what a limited view this represents is strikingly demonstrated by the exhibition's range and diversity. Ruisdael may confine himself to landscape, but within that broad category he explores every type of subject and, more significantly, expresses it within a variety of mood from the sunny and serene to the tempestuous and disturbed. It is this sense of an artist consistently communicating through an imaginative arrangement of nature, unencumbered by any restraints of topographical accuracy which absorbs the spectator.

Ruisdael worked in a variety of media. Although primarily a painter he was also an active draughtsman, who produced a by no means negligible group of etchings. Large-scale canvases alternate with little pictures, which often convey as much or more. His subject matter includes, dunes, beaches, seascapes, water-mills, waterfalls, mountains, town views, cornfields, castles, woody pools and particularly trees. Sometimes he paints "close-ups", at other times panoramas. Different lights at different seasons of the year are all part of his repertoire. The snowy winter scene or the seascapes may occur rarely, but when they do their effect is keenly felt.

Within each picture there are usually a number of subsidiary motifs, which offer centres of interest throughout the composition. As one examines the length and breadth of Ruisdael's landscapes - and the breadth is equally important since the elements, whether sun, clouds or wind tend to operate across the canvas - the eye is delighted by details, such as the church on a hill, or linen laid out on the bleaching fields. The depth of his pictures is most skilfully graded, so that not only does he achieve continuity, but in contrast to many other Dutch painters, whether of his uncle Salomon van Ruisdael's generation, such as Jan van Goyen, or his own contemporaries, for example Adriaen and the younger Willem van de Velde, he introduces much more incident between foreground and background.

Ruisdael is also a superb manipulator of the paint brush. One watches him coming to grips with painting the varying textures and substances of the natural world. Sometimes it came effortlessly, as in his handling of the crumbling bark on a tree or reeds beside a pond. Other substances such as water required more sustained effort; in an early sea-piece the waves lack texture, whereas in the "Rough Sea" from Boston there is an incomparably vivid and chilling representation of spray from the choppy waves whipped up by the wind. The mill race provides greater problems to transform what in earlier works looks more like cotton wool to a convincing portrayal of tumbling rushing water. He can paint grandly, as in the numerous studies of broadly executed scudding clouds, which so frequently represent half of the area of his pictures. (It is an unfortunate result of his technique that time has dealt much more harshly with his skies than his *terra firma*.) Or he can paint like the most refined miniaturist in his rendering of lilies in a pond or farm buildings or brick walls. Compared with Ruisdael, Hobbema is summary in his execution of buildings, whereas on the contrary Jan van der Heyden appears pernickety, so that the momentum of painting is lost.

But for all that this rewarding exhibition shows and tells us, it cannot but leave a number of unanswered and perhaps unanswerable questions. An apparently adequate figure painter in his youth, why did he later invite the intervention of other artists, such as Adriaen van de Velde, and Nicolaes Berchem, sometimes to the picture's detriment? Given the almost total absence of working sketches in his existing oeuvre, what, if any, was the role of drawing in the creation of his pictures? How far, if at all, is the spectator to read specific symbols or allegories in Ruisdael's landscapes? Unfortunately, neither the artist nor any of his contemporaries has left unequivocal evidence to enlighten us about these varied matters. The main clues must remain in the works themselves, and to these we can happily return.

Square holes and golf clubs

By Frances Spalding

British Sculpture
Whitechapel Gallery

With the agility of a magician, post-war sculpture has frequently changed its act. Nor has it ignored that trick which never fails to win applause - vanishing. Part 2 of the Whitechapel Art Gallery's survey of twentieth-century British sculpture is necessarily confusing because during this period sculpture became unlined. It took on synthetic colour and adopted minimal extremes. It acknowledged technology and incorporated movement and light. It discovered ideas and forgot about materials and then rediscovered materials and forgot ideas. For a brief period it became what sculpture is traditionally not: a photograph, a walk through a landscape or a pile of 5,800 oranges gradually depleted over two weeks to nil. It became a square hole cut into a field and lined with turf and mirror so that the hole itself, like the conjuror's egg, disappears.

The vanishing hole cannot be lightly dismissed. Until that moment in 1968 when Keith Arnatt, for the purposes of the photograph shown here, made the invisible hole visible by placing his shadow over it, the hole had occupied a strategic position in British sculpture. Its original authorship had been contested, its role so earnestly discussed that it had become the subject of *Punch* cartoons. Patrick Caulfield, searching for a cliché for the painting shown here, "Sculpture in a Landscape", seized on a Hepworth which mounts two framed holes one on top of the other. Once the focus had become the point where sculpture ceases to exist, a precedent had been set for the further dematerialization of sculpture into land art, conceptual art and performance. In order to make the invisible, sculpture itself had first to disappear.

Many, therefore, will find this jam-packed show an anorexic experience. The more cerebral sculpture becomes, the more it is absent in physical terms, until, as with Tim Head's installation, it becomes illusionism, an image of a staircase projected confusingly onto the staircase wall. The show charts sculpture's post-war progress but does not explain it. For reasons of space it represents artists at their most distinctive period and makes no attempt to trace careers. It therefore gives little sense of what the younger sculptors were reacting against. Moore and Hepworth, though wealthy in reputation during this period, are slightly misrepresented. Nor does the extroverted industrial sculpture of the New Generation artists emerge with an impact equivalent to what it created in the 1960s.

By the late 1960s, disenchantment had set in. Moore's monumental bronzes were suspected of theft; those artists who looked instead to Anthony Caro's steel-girder poetry

found their large-scale work difficult to sell and to store. Alternatives were found in the humorous and lightweight. Rounding a corner in this show one encounters Barry Flanagan's "winged" guinea, in which wobbly shapes made out of stuffed material mock the rigidity of steel. Further on, Bruce McLean is photographed in the pose of Moore's "Fallen Warrior", found earlier in the show. In "Plinth Work" McLean adopts various poses on the theme of the reclining figure, contorting himself across the kind of pedestals used to lift sculpture off the floor and transpose it into the realm of art.

By 1970, sculpture had been deposed and the artist enthroned. Gilbert and George posed with gilded hands and faces as "living sculptures". Richard Long made his knapsack and booted presence in landscape the subject of his art. The map and photograph exhibited here celebrate a hundred mile walk that lasted seven days. Sculpture had extended its dimensions to include time, while its practice had become so oddly diverse. "Day 3", Long's notes read, "spent tracking icicles from grass stems." Traditionally substantial, sculpture was now made to be impermanent. A photograph records the room John Hilliard hung with paper balls on invisible thread. Nearby on a glass shelf sit David Tremlett's eighty-one cassettes recording spring noises in different counties. Anything that involved more than two dimensions could now become sculpture, even if its presentation in the gallery was confined to a photograph: McLean's "Floataway Piece" is about leaves passing down river at Barnes.

Immaterial concepts offered relief after material excess. But a decade on, the ideas presented often seem tenuous. From the Tate's collection come extremes of intellectual rigour such as Michael Craig-Martin's literal realization of "4 identical boxes with their lids reversed". More recently, a reaction against mandarin taste has brought a return to vernacular traditions. But the last decade is the least well represented in this show. The selection looks arbitrary and is confusing, the thematic headings being too vague to offer useful guidelines. It is full of British Council and Arts Council favourites and empty of women, though women sculptors working in various media have made a distinctive contribution in recent years.

The exhibition begins and ends with a reference to war. It has been argued that the sense of menace in the spiky, constructed metal sculpture produced in the Cold War period lay more in the mind of the spectator than in the sculpture itself. But this opening section does strike a macabre note, mixed with nervous elegance as in Lynn Chadwick's "Dragonfly" which hangs from the ceiling. A sense of horror clings also to Bernard Meadows's crustacea and Elizabeth Frink's dead or wingless birds, and to Michael Sandle's "Minister for Propaganda", a gas-masked Mickey Mouse, found at the end of the show. But the artist who deals most poignantly with his experience of war is George Fullard. His "Infant St George", collaged out of found pieces of wood, a golf-club becoming the child's foot, is both exuberant and memorable, its poetry a strange amalgam of wit and terror.

Among this week's contributors

JOHN BATCHELOR is a Fellow of New College, Oxford.

JOHN BAYLEY is Warton Professor of English at Oxford. His *Shakespeare and Tragedy* was published earlier this year.

JACQUES BERQUE's books include *The Arabs*, 1969, and *Egypt: Imperialism and Business*, 1972.

ALAN BOLD is writing a critical study of Hugh MacDiarmid.

BRUCE BOUCHER is a lecturer in the History of Art at University College London.

OM BRACK is Professor of English and Bibliography at Arizona State University.

RICHARD BROWN is co-editor of the *James Joyce Broadsheet*.

ROBERT BROWNING is Professor Emeritus of Classics at Birkbeck College, London. His *The Byzantine Empire* was published last year.

ROBIN BURS is a lecturer in French at Woolwich College of Further Education.

A. S. BYATT's latest novel is *The Virgin in the Garden*, 1978.

GLENN CAVALIERO is a lecturer in English at the University of Cambridge.

PATRICK COLLINSON is Professor of History at the University of Kent. His most recent book is *Archbishop Grindal 1519-1583: the Struggle for a Reformed Church*, 1979.

ROBERT CONQUEST's recent books include *Kolyma: the Arctic Death Camps*, 1978, and *Forays*, 1979.

PETER CONRAD's books include *Romantic Opera and Literary Form*.

ANTHONY CONRAN's collections of poems include *Poems 1952-67*, 1974.

AIDAN DAY is a lecturer in English at the University of Hull.

PAUL DRIVER is writing a book on Peter Maxwell Davies.

PETER EARLE's *The World of Defoe* was published in 1977. His latest book, *The Sack of Panama*, will be reviewed in next week's TLS.

RAANAN GILLOU is editor of the *Journal of Medical Ethics* and a student health physician at Imperial College, London.

NORMAN HAMFORD's books include *The Life and Opinions of Maximilien Robespierre*, 1975.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published next spring.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian book-seller in London.

GREVILLE LINDOP's *The Ophium-Eater*, a biography of De Quincey, was published earlier this year.

JOHN MCMANNERS is Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Oxford. His *Death and Enlightenment* was published last month.

OSWYN MURRAY is a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. He is the author of *Early Greece*, 1980.

DAVID NOKER is a lecturer in English at King's College, London.

GEORGE PARFITT is the author of *Ben Jonson: Public Poet and Private Man*, 1976.

STEPHEN PLAICE's latest translation, with his brother Neville, is of Tancréd Dorst's *Merlin*.

ALAN RYAN teaches Politics at New College, Oxford.

MALCOLM SCHOFIELD is the author of *An Essay On Anaxagoras*, 1980.

A. W. B. SIMPSON is Professor of Law at the University of Kent.

FRANCES SPALDING's biography of Roger Fry was published last year.

EUGEN WEBER is Dean of the College of Letters and Science in the University of California, Los Angeles.

CHRISTOPHER WHITE's *The Dutch Pictures in the Collection of H. H. The Queen* will be published next year.

M. E. YAPP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

Andrei Voznesensky

Sir, - Carol Rumens's article (Commentary, November 27) on Andrei Voznesensky's reading at the Round House contains a number of factual and textual errors, and some strangely impertinent jibes to boot. May I cite just four examples?

Her first alleged quotation from the man's actual verse claims that "Sometimes he gets hooked on an insight that becomes tedious on repetition: 'Man does not live by sky alone', for example." The poem this pretends to come from, "Chagall's Cornflowers", is clearly printed in *Nostalgia for the Present*, and the *leitmotif*-cum-refrain clearly reads (and was read loud and clear by Edward Fox at Chalk Farm), "Man Lives by Sky Alone" - "Lives", not "does not live"; the tedium is in the ear of your reporter.

She concedes that Voznesensky is "impressive . . . as a performer," and yet she approached this Round House session as though it were some ghastly exam, and elicits at the beginning of her article from "some remark I couldn't quite catch" - something about our being a "cool country" . . . a sneaking suspicion that he'd decided to fail us. Is your paper really more interested in its correspondents brandishing their inferiorly complexes, than in their doing the requisite homework? It was perfectly obvious to me that, in thanking us for his deservedly enthusiastic first round of applause with "I had thought . . . you are cool country", Voznesensky was reflecting on the famous British reserve and congratulating us for overcoming it. Your commentator decided not to, with the mysteriously xenophobic observation that "We British like to be amused, and we are not going to let a Russian poet stand in our way." What a pity she didn't let the Russian poetry, or its translations, stand in the way of her misreadings of it. Perhaps she turns the Chagall poem's coda on its head because, again, the author had bothered to inform us that in Russian "nebom" ("by sky" or more likely by "heaven") he said "thymus" with "khebon" ("by bread") indicating a tacit invocation of the biblical saying, "Man lives by sky alone when his spirit soars to transcend national boundaries and iron curtains, as in the paintings of Chagall, whose display and reproduction are still more or less banned in the Soviet Union.

Rumens misrepresents, again, with her arrogant conviction that "To the authorities [Voznesensky] is the just about acceptable face of rebellion . . . he is not a political animal". The fact is that he has suffered virtually non-stop harassment and attempted suppression of his private writing and public reading career ever since it began in 1958. His uncompromisingly libertarian play *Save Your Face*, which cries out for the freedom of the individual personality - "he who would save his face shall lose it" (cf. Nixon et al) - was stopped and withdrawn after a highly successful opening at Moscow's leading avant-garde theatre, the Taganka, in the early 1970s. Rumens's deductions about Voznesensky's acceptability to officialdom inside Russia seem based on third-party hearsay. The poet's peers - dissidents, exiles and native Soviet allies - tell me that the reason he manages to stay ahead of his enemies is by embedding in his worldwide appeal, combining the grass-roots populism of Allen Ginsberg with the classical charisma of Nureyev.

Rumens's closing proposition is typical of her unimaginative stance: "A licensed exporter of the Russian soul" or some such cultural commodity. Voznesensky does not merely match the range and brilliance of a poet like Brodsky.

Rumens is inevitably better informed, more inward, with the (self) translated works of Brodsky and with his situation past and present, than with those of Voznesensky, who easily predictable that

she promptly crowns the former the better poet. It's understandable, if not commendable: her false logic is neither. If Voznesensky could indeed be proven the less brilliant writer, it wouldn't be because he's an exporter, any more than Brodsky would be more so by dint of being the reverse - eg, an antagonist of the soulfulness of the Soviet state or satirist of the security service (which, ironically, Voznesensky himself so often turns out to be).

As Brodsky addresses his verse most deliberately, almost exclusively, to intellectuals, whereas Voznesensky is simultaneously the Russian equivalent of a perennially chattering folk or pop-congratulated singer, it was on the cards that any comparison to be made between the two would come out looking odious.

MICHAEL HOROVITZ,
New Departures, Piedmont, Bisleigh, Stroud, Glas GL6 7BU.

Stevie Smith

Sir, - It was with pleasure that Jack Barbera and I read John Bayley's discerning and enthusiastic review of the book we edited, *Mr. Again: Uncollected Writings of Stevie Smith* (November 6). We are especially gratified that Professor Bayley found our introduction "admirable", though we are slightly embarrassed by the extent of his praise - "in itself a wholly adequate substitute for any biography". Having been at work on a biography of Stevie Smith since 1978, we are only too aware of how inadequate our introduction would be were it to pass as a substitute for a critical biography. We should like to assure hundreds of people who have entrusted us with recollections and with letters from Stevie that we are indeed still at work on our biography. We want also to invite any friends or associates of Stevie Smith with whom we've not been in touch to write to us so that our account of Stevie's life and work may finally be as accurate and revealing as possible. There is no doubt that, when fully presented, the rich and fascinating life of this major modern poet will lambently illumine her writings.

WILLIAM MCBRIEN,
181-11 Kildare Road, Jamaica, New York 11432.

'The Forgotten Colony'

Sir, - The accusations of "muddling accounts" and of weighing down narrative with wrong detail that are made against Andrew Graham Vayoli's *The Forgotten Colony* by Nicholas Shakespeare (November 20) could be equally directed to his review. No region around Mendoza was ever named Nueva Inglaterra to celebrate Philip's marriage to Mary Tudor. The city of Mendoza itself did not come into existence until 1561, and by then the news of Mary's death in 1558 had reached even the Captaincy-General of Chile. When its governor, García de Mendoza, sent out an expedition across the Andes to found the settlement that bears his name, there was no longer a "dynasty of crowns" to celebrate, and very appropriately, he had himself honoured instead.

Shakespeare is probably thinking of the expeditions that left Chile three years earlier and went to the region several hundred miles to the north of future Mendoza. It took place soon after the governor of Chile was allowed to extend his jurisdiction over the region of Tucumán. Juan Pérez de Zurita, whom he had appointed his lieutenant and Chief Justice of Tucumán, set out in the middle of 1558 and established, some sixty miles equidistant from the towns of Copiapó in Chile and Santiago de Estero, the city of San Juan Bautista de la Rivera de Londres de la Nueva Inglaterra, in a territory belonging to the Diaguita Indians. In what is today a remote corner of the renamed Argentine province of Catamarca.

Rumens is inevitably better informed, more inward, with the (self) translated works of Brodsky and with his situation past and present, than with those of Voznesensky, who easily predictable that

to the editor

Unlike the city after which it was named, the Andean Londres has not changed much in the past three hundred years. It has remained a small and sleepy village of a few hundred inhabitants, one-floor adobe houses with thatched roofs and a few, unpaved streets. At least so it was when I saw it briefly in 1964. But it has the great distinction of being one of the earliest settlements in present-day Argentina - according to some accounts the fifth oldest - and, as such, it appears in every local history book. Its name, only known as *Londres*, puzzles the student and traveller alike. One theory as to its origins that I remember hearing as a child in Buenos Aires, was that Zurita, in all probability a reader of Spanish chivalry romances, had come across the euphonious *Londres* much in the same way as other readers-cum-explorers came across the names of California and Patagonia. This seemed all the more plausible since things English played such an important part in Spanish chivalry books and, however ignorant of Arthurian influences, we had all at least heard of *Palmerin de Inglaterra*. The true reason is of course more pedestrian, yet the subsequent history of the Spanish and English crowns has cast, retrospectively, an even more fanciful light on the ambitions that fostered the founding of Londres de la Nueva Inglaterra, than any romance of chivalry might have done.

DANIEL WASSBORN,
46 Leckford Road, Oxford OX2 6HY.

'The Uses of Obscurity'

Sir, - I am sorry about A. H. White's distress (Letters, November 20), which seems to have blinded him to what my review (November 13) actually said. It did not, as he complains, attack all six books discussed: one was praised unreservedly; another, largely so. It did not rest its charge of obscurantism on the quoting of "a difficult Garman word" which it "misspells" (ie, an unlamented omission, for which I am sorry); a whole list of misty technicalities was cited. Nor did I put forward the bizarre interpretation of *The Golden Bowl* which White's letter attempts to foist on to me. I argued that a specific passage in the novel does not mean what he says it does. His inability to distinguish between comment on a particular point and an overall interpretation is further evidence of the critical tendency remarked on in my review.

Lastly, White says he is not perverse in claiming Conrad is "assimilating" Kurtz's fiancée to "the powers of darkness" since "Conrad . . . tells us that she resembled the African woman". But Marlow only speaks of the fiancée - who has stretched out her arms and clasped her hands - "resembling in this gesture" the African woman. There is no suggestion of any affinity beyond that of helpless grief. Despite this, White's book not only compares the fiancée to the African woman but says they are both "like the sinister pair of women in Brussels . . . powers of darkness". As the final pages of *Heart of Darkness* make quite unobscure, this is not tenable.

Princes, Dukes and Cardinals

Sir, - Ludovico M. Boncompagni's comments on Cardinal Sapieha (Letters, November 20) call for substantial correction on several points.

(1) To call Lithuanian dukes "princes" is quite incorrect. They were members of the Lithuanian royal family, usually descendants of Litawor and Giedymyn, whose grandson was the Polish king Wladyslaw Jagiello - or even of Rurik, first Norman duke of Novgorod, held to be first ruler of future Russia, from whom the immediate predecessor of Cardinal Sapieha, Cardinal Duke Puzyna was descended. The original title of those dukes was "kniaz".

(2) Hence "Duke Sapieha". He was not Prince-Bishop, and then Prince-Archbishop of Cracow in virtue of an Imperial decision of Francis Joseph I of 1889. If that were correct, it would be the second princely title attached to the bishops of Cracow, and of no particular significance. The bishops of Cracow had been territorial princes of Siewierz (Siewierz), a Silesian principedom, since 1446, when Zbigniew Cardinal Oleśnicki acquired it for himself and his apostolic successors. Politically the principedom was attached to the voivodship (province) of Cracow, while remaining an independent unit of the Kingdom of Poland (with which Lithuania, comprising all Byelorussian and Ukrainian lands, was incorporated).

It follows that Karol Cardinal Wojtyla was Prince of Siewierz before he was elected Pope John Paul II.

(3) It is immaterial that this title was abolished by Pope Pius XII, or its use discontinued by him, since it was not a Papal title, but one of the Kingdom of Poland; and only Poland can make the Archbishop of Cracow abandon it. The Republic of Poland, as it was constituted in 1918, did not acknowledge titles; but would never have questioned the use of the Archbishop of Cracow. The Polish People's Republic has taken no interest in it.

(4) Sr Boncompagni is mistaken in assuming that Minskowsky, Röschke and Rietz were the last archbishops to use the "dynastic" title of Prince-Archbishops. The Archbishop of Wrocław (Breslau) and Bishop of Biskupiec (Heilsberg) in Poland carry the title of Prince of Nysa (Neisse) and of Warmia (Ermland) re-

There, the fiancée is said to have "the delicate shade of truthfulness" upon her features; she displays "a mature capacity for fidelity", her glance is "guileless, profound, confident, and trustful", her forehead is "illuminated by the unextinguishable light of belief and love". If this constitutes an affinity with the powers of darkness in White's eyes, his way of seeing things must have been sadly impaired by the "112 different" interpretations of *Heart of Darkness*; his book assures us he has "looked at it".

PETER KEMP.

61 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3.

Naming Owls

Sir, - In answer to Philip Thody's question, in his review of Hervé Bazin's *L'Église verte* (November 30): no, I didn't know that "un scops" was a "a dwarf owl", and I still don't. There is no European owl bearing the designation "dwarf", though there are three species characterized by their smallness. They are (1) the Little Owl, (2) the Pygmy Owl, and (3) the Scops Owl.

Now if I "dwarf owl" we are to understand either (1) or (2), then the implication is that the French have wickedly or negligently thrown a spanner in the works of lawful taxonomy by pinching the name of the third species to describe one of the other two. If, on the other hand, Mr Thody wants us to know that the French call a Scops Owl "un scops", I find I can take the news quite calmly.

Incidentally, does Mr Thody, or anyone, know what the English call the *hibou petit-duc*?

ROGER W. JONES.

Bryn Clettwr, Pontshen, Llan-dysul, Dyfed.

The United Irishmen

Sir, - Joseph O'Brien's letter of September 18 has only now been shown to me. The figures I quoted as to membership of the United Irishmen in Carlow in 1798, however improbable they may seem to Mr O'Brien, are those revealed in the latest research on that place and time. *Quod scripsi* then: the statistics stand even if he be shocked at the extent of the politicization they indicate.

PÁDRAIG Ó SNODAIGH,
Irish History Workshop Journal,
127 Bóthar na Trí, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

Joint Winner of the Wolfson Literary Award for History, 1981

A Liberal Descent

Victorian Historians and the English Past
J. W. BURROW

The idea of a 'Whig interpretation' of English history incorporates the two fundamental notions of progress and continuity. The former made it possible to read English history as a 'success story'; the latter endorsed a pragmatic, gradualist political style as the foundation of English freedom.

Dr Burrow explores these ideas, and the tensions between them, in studies of four major Victorian historians: Macaulay, Stubbs, Freeman, and Froude. He analyses their works in terms of their rhetorical suggestiveness as well as their explicit arguments, and he places them in their cultural and historiographical context.

Learned, witty and exceptionally well-written. *The Times*

£19.50 net

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Trust the teller, not the telly

Andrina
BBC TV

It took George Mackay-Brown less than seven pages of print (in *The Scottish Review* of August 1979) to tell the story of "Andrina". It is a beautiful haunting tale about a revenant, told with ballad-like simplicity. Captain Bill Torvald, a no-nonsense, tough old seaman, narrates a first-person confession. He has been helped over an illness by a friendly girl he knew only as Andrina. In return, she asks that the Captain should tell her the details of a love story. "It was", says the Captain, speaking in the images of George Mackay-Brown, "a tale spiced in the light of a single, pale summer. A young man and a young girl. Strid, had made love by the sea. She had conceived, and he had

Andrina, speaking in the images of George Mackay-Brown, "a tale spiced in the light of a single, pale summer. A young man and a young girl. Strid, had made love by the sea. She had conceived, and he had

threatened by television. In the introduction to *The Two Flinders* (1974) he said "Now, alas, the story-making gift is waning in the islands, and will wane increasingly as we watch our television serials on a winter evening, and read sordid ugly 'real' stories out of the newspapers. Brown developed his prose style by combining the oral rhythms of Orkney with the literary model of symbolism he inherited from Edwin Muir. By subjecting the deceptively casual speaking voice to a technique of counterpoint, Brown suggests the superiority of imaginative prose to television's instant entertainment.

It is paradoxical, then, that he allowed *Andrina* to be dramatized for television, and the result is not entirely happy. Bill Forsyth's film took fifty minutes of prime viewing time to retell the story.

The element of mystery is retained, in spite of the story suddenly springs its narrative surprise on the reader. On the screen the psycho-

logical shock of the ending has to be built up into a major issue. The Captain receives a letter from Australia. Instead of opening it, he wastes time, walks into the village, stands in the pub, walks up the street and down the street and back up the street again. All this stretching-out of material amounts to nothing very much. By the time he gets round to opening the letter even the slowest viewer must have got the point. Just in case, though, Forsyth has a photograph of Andrina inserted into the letter. The Captain, realizing she is a revenant, accepts it philosophically and puffs on his pipe. End of programme.

The setting by Cyril Cusack and Wendy Morgan, is good; clearly they did everything the directed asked of them. Yet the imaginative ambiguity of the story is diminished in the transition from writer's words to over-projected and stereotyped images of old salt and young lass.

Alan Bold

Experiences of harmony

By Bruce Boucher

JOHN McANDREW:
Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance
599pp. MIT Press. £24.80
0 282 13157 9

DEBORAH HOWARD:
The Architectural History of Venice
263pp. Baisford. £15.
0 8419 0681 5

The publication of two new books on Venetian architecture is a welcome event, especially with authors of the calibre of the late John McAndrew and Deborah Howard. Both are well known for scholarly studies in the field. McAndrew was the catalyst of the drawings of the eighteenth-century architect and theoretician Antonio Vignola, and Miss Howard as the author of a book on the architecture of Jacopo Sansovino. By turning to a more general survey of Venetian architecture, each author has drawn upon a wide range of specialized material, much of it not available in English, and each has produced a "first" of a sort: McAndrew's *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance* is the first extended account of the subject since the 1890s, and Miss Howard's *The Architectural History of Venice* is the first book in English which takes the story of Venetian buildings down to the present day. While neither book is exclusively addressed to an academic audience, they both require a degree of familiarity with their subjects and with architectural history in general; the very detailed nature of McAndrew's book will ensure it is carefully read by anyone with a particular interest in its subject, while Miss Howard's account offers just the sort of introduction that an undergraduate or intelligent reader would find helpful.

Reading the two books in tandem, one finds they agree, generally, on those areas in which they overlap, but the contrast in style and method is striking. It is not entirely a question of Miss Howard's having to compress into thirty-five pages what McAndrew has barely contained within six hundred; rather, the difference seems, if not exactly of generations, then certainly one of temperament and intellectual orientation. Like many younger architectural historians, Miss Howard tends to eschew discussions of the appearance and feel of buildings in favour of a factually based account of architecture, often with reference to its economic and historical context. McAndrew's approach is very much the opposite. His roots are firmly in the Ruskinian tradition of working towards the general from a careful analysis of the particular, and this approach informed the whole of his vast undertaking.

McAndrew's account of the origin of his project is characteristic of the bias of his book. One summer, while sitting in the Caffè Florian, the author overheard two German professors lamenting the absence of a serious work on post-Gothic architecture in Venice; they deemed such a project hopeless because of the lack of good photographs of the buildings. Naturally enough, McAndrew rebelled at the thought of such an "imaginary obstacle and at the tendency of some architectural historians to work from photographs rather than from the buildings themselves. So he decided to prove that one could produce a study of the first phase of Venetian Renaissance architecture by working directly from the buildings themselves; conversely, McAndrew spent several summers looking at buildings in Venice and recording his impressions of them. More specifically, his purpose was to chronicle the changes in style which occurred in Venetian architecture between 1460 and the 1520s, roughly from the first transitional works to the beginnings of the High Renaissance. As his focus was more upon the vocabulary of Venetian architecture, his book takes the form of thirty-three chapters,

mainly given over to extended analysis of individual buildings or related groups of buildings. The chapters are, in turn, grouped under four main headings: the first Renaissance work and the career of Antonio Rizzo; the works of Pietro Lombardo and works close to his style; the career of Mauro Codussi, probably the most important architect of the period; and the post-Codussian architecture of the first two decades of the sixteenth century.

Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance is unlike most books on architecture, and it is also a work which its author did not live to complete. Hence, it resists an easy assessment. Whether the author would have made significant additions or deletions is impossible to say, but the book might have benefited from a greater degree of synthesis, either by reshaping existing chapters or by including chapters which brought the strands of the text together. As it stands, the book's virtues and vices are those peculiar to its empirical scheme. It is at its best in the analysis of individual buildings but less good on integrating this information into a broader pattern. To take the positive side first, the author's meticulous approach pays dividends in terms of many acute observations. Thus he draws attention to a rarely noted feature of Rizzo's ceremonial staircase in the Doge's Palace, the *scala dei giganti*; the staircase veers slightly from left to right so that it can link the arcades of the palace and the entrance of the Arco Foscari, neither of which are, in fact, aligned. McAndrew also draws our attention to the clever use of a fragmentary order of Ionic pilasters along the base of the canal side of Santa Maria del Miracoli, a touch which gives the illusion of another floor of the building below the water. The extended essays on Rizzo's work in the Doge's Palace, on the design of Santa Maria del Miracoli, and on Codussi's Santa Maria Formosa are especially memorable examples of the author's ability to read the evidence of buildings and to write about it with clarity and wit.

The hero of the book is Mauro Codussi, the Bergamo architect who practised in Venice from 1468 until his death in 1504. Little is known of Codussi before he burst upon the scene with the commission to rebuild San Michele in Isola, but he appears to have had a first-hand knowledge of Alberti's work and possibly Brunelleschi's as well. Like Palladio half a century later, Codussi brought to Venice the gifts and the good fortune to receive commissions commensurate with his talent. Particularly in the field of ecclesiastical architecture, his redisplayment of the old Byzantine quincunx or grid-like sequence of squares and rectangles enabled Codussi to reconcile traditional Venetian building types with Albertian theories of order and clarity. To step inside Codussi's buildings is to experience harmony and technical on a level not seen again in Venetian architecture before Palladio. Buildings like San Giovanni Crisostomo and Santa Maria Formosa bring to mind Palladio's observations on architectural harmony; churches he wrote in the fourth book of the *Quattro Libri*, should be constructed "in such a manner and with such proportions, that all the parts together may convey a pleasing harmony to the eyes of the spectators." As a whole, Codussi's architecture forms a more coherent entity and seems more progressive in its adaptation of Central Italian patterns than does the generality of contemporary Venetian architecture. So it is not surprising that McAndrew has been much successful in bringing him to life. Had the more problematic figures of Antonio Rizzo and Pietro Lombardo.

The chapters on architecture after Codussi's death will also be well received by students of the period. The first two decades of the sixteenth century are among the least studied or understood periods in the whole of Venetian architecture; yet it was

a period of crucial importance, as it witnessed the first stages in the transformation of St Mark's Square and the beginnings of several major structures, like the Fondaco del Tedesco, San Salvatore, and the Scuola di San Rocco. The merit of the author's work in this section is to provide a detailed account of such buildings and of architects like Tullio Lombardo, son of Pietro and better known as a sculptor, Giovanni Buora, and Bartolomeo Bon, the predecessor of Sansovino as architect to the Procurators of St Mark's. The reconstruction of Tullio Lombardo's architectural career is particularly welcome, although McAndrew gives him less credit than he probably deserves for the elevation of San Salvatore.

Certainly, there is much to praise in *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, and it will serve as a medium for revealing the pleasures of an important phase of architecture to a wider public. But it must be said that the book falls short of its ambitious goal. Some limitations, as noted above, arise from the structure of the text, while others are inherent in our present limited understanding of the period itself. The author's approach shifts uneasily from chapters constructed around a theme (altars or chapels, for example), to ones on single buildings, and to others on architects. It is a system which militates against a coherent picture, and fragmentation is also enhanced by the decision to treat the major works of Codussi or Lombardo in a sequence of discrete essays, thereby minimizing continuity and development. The very detailed accounts of the buildings also leads, on occasion, to a certain myopia.

The façade of the Scuola di San Marco is analysed in isolation from the adjacent façade of the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo, with its similar system of blind arcading and an imposing portal of the transitional period from Gothic to Renaissance. When viewed together, one cannot escape the feeling that the designers of the Scuola's façade intended it to be an answer to that of the church. The history of rivalry between churches and confraternities, as well as among confraternities, would lend colour to such an explanation for the imposing façade of the Scuola di San Marco. Here, too, the narrow focus of the book precludes reference to the architectural drawings of Jacopo Bellini or to later buildings like the chapel of St Anthony in Padua, although works like these make the façade of the Scuola di San Marco more comprehensible. The chapter on Santa Maria Formosa is similarly full of interesting observations but does not tell the reader why the church faces away from the *campo*. In general, more space could have been allotted to topics like patronage, the nature of Venice, and building materials and methods.

One puts down McAndrew's book with the feeling that his efforts may have been somewhat premature. Since Paoletti's monumental *L'Architettura e la scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia* of 1893, the general state of knowledge concerning fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Venetian architecture has advanced very slowly. Paoletti first identified Mauro Codussi and discovered numerous documents which have yet to be digested by later scholars. Paoletti's volumes still offer the most detailed account of that period, not only because of his comprehensive familiarity with the documents, but also because he had a Ruskinian eye for detail. Both are needed to make sense of Venetian architecture. Since Paoletti's day, much of the most rewarding work on Venetian architecture has been done by concentration upon individual buildings or on aspects of the building trade. These studies have told us a great deal, but they have not brought us to the stage at which a work on the scale of McAndrew's could be wholly feasible. There are simply too many missing names, missing dates, and a heterogeneity of styles that make a coherent picture of Venetian architecture, yet it was

If McAndrew's book may not have achieved its primary objective, it is, nonetheless, a positive contribution towards an understanding of Venetian Renaissance architecture. Under one cover, it furnishes a wide range of information and observations, and the text is accompanied by over four hundred photographs, which have been chosen with great discernment. With these virtues, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance* will remain a valuable reference work for many years to come.

Passing from John McAndrew's book to Deborah Howard's is like stepping out of a gondola and into a *vaporetto*. The *Architectural History of Venice* moves through thirteen centuries at a rapid clip and fills each page with a remarkable amount of information. Occasionally, one may wish for fewer facts and more colour, but Miss Howard's book is the best concise introduction to Venetian architecture in English. At the outset, the author states that her book will concentrate on "the finest, most influential buildings, those which, most of all, reward one's attention with their subtlety and inventiveness, and offer the most lasting satisfaction"; the book avoids "what one might be tempted to call the typical buildings of each age, for these are, by definition, distinguished by their ordinariness". This may well be the right criterion to apply in a short book, although it seems a pity that more space could not have been given to the least monumentally imposing side of Venetian architecture, an aspect which has been brilliantly exploited by Italian authors like Egle Tincanato and Antonio Salvadori.

Two chapters of *The Architectural History of Venice* will commend themselves to those wishing to know why Venetian architecture is *sui generis*: that on the medieval city and the companion one on Gothic. There one finds a clear account of the modes of water and pedestrian traffic, and standard building materials, and an explanation of the structure of Venetian palaces, churches and *scuole*. This is just the sort of information that anyone who visits Venice will want to know, and the author puts to good use the com-

ments of visitors like Coryate and Goethe. This part of the book conveys a more vivid sense of the atmosphere of the city than is found in the later, more strictly art-historical chapters.

Another aspect of the book that will be gratefully received is the account of architecture since the fall of the Republic in 1797. This has been one aspect of Venetian history and architecture that has aroused great interest in recent years, and Miss Howard has been able to draw upon important studies by Giovanni Romanelli, Jürgen Jünger, and Alvis Zorzi. During the nineteenth century, Venice was a political football, and much of the destruction and rebuilding had definite political purposes, all of which the author brings out very well. The pages on nineteenth-century architecture are brief, not only because there has been little built worthy of the city itself, but also because so many questions about its future remain in the air. Miss Howard's view of the changes that have befallen Venice since 1797 is a balanced one; she regrets the orgy of demolition but accepts the necessity of change for survival. It is, however, surprising that she finds Nervi's and Scattolon's inappropriately named Casa di Risparmio a successful contribution to the Venetian scene, rather than a spectacular example of architectural vandalism!

If *The Architectural History of Venice* lacks anything, it is a bit more of the spirit which imbues John McAndrew's writing. The concentration on façades and ground plans may leave many readers dazzled and sometimes tends to give a rather denatured picture of the city. Miss Howard rarely takes us inside buildings, which is a pity with so many unusual and interesting ones from the seventeenth century onwards, like the frescoed *salone* of the Palazzo Zenobio or the splendidly neo-Gothic vestibule of the Danieli hotel. However, these are minor points of disagreement, and the author's account of Venetian architecture is very balanced and good. For a more in-depth, prescient view of the city, one should turn back to John McAndrew or, better still, to Marcel Proust and Thomas Mann.

In the beginning

By Martin Robertson

PIERRE AMIET, CHRISTIANE DESROCHES NOBLECOURT, ALAIN PASQUER, FRANÇOIS BARATTE and CATHERINE MEYER:

Art in the Ancient World
A Handbook of Styles and Forms
Translated by Valerie Bynner
567pp. Faber. £20.
0 571 11743 0

In his preface, Jean Hirschen claims this book as "suitable for travellers, scholars, art-lovers and dealers, among others". Of these, scholars will perhaps get least from it, but there is something for them too: as a classicist with only a superficial knowledge of Egyptian art and no great sympathy for it, I myself found the general introduction to the Egyptian section enlightening and inspiring.

The authors are scholars, all curators at the Louvre. The method, explained in the preface, was for each contributor to begin by selecting a representative scene of ancient buildings and objects, from which drawings were then made, and to write for these a brief introductory essay or essays. It is not easy to compress such vast fields into an article that is both readable and informative, and they have done it in the main extremely well. The time-span is from the beginning to around the fifth century AD. The book begins with the Middle East; a very short introduction by P. Amiet to the whole area, and then sections on The Iranian World;

Mesopotamia; Sumer, Babylon, Assyria; and The Levant: Syria and Palestine. Next comes Egypt, by C. Desroches Noblecourt; a longer introduction, followed by sections on The Old, Middle and New Kingdom and The Late Period. There follow three undivided chapters: Greece, by A. Pasquier; and F. Baratte and C. Metzger on Etruria and the Etruscans, and on Rome.

Each section has a map, a concise bibliography, and a list of major museums which specialize in the art in question; and there is a glossary at the end. The drawings rarely do everything claimed for them by Noblecourt, but they do convey something of the "styles and forms" and provide a useful body of reference. The translation reads well and seems in the main accurate.

A few complaints: Cyprus has virtually fallen out; more should surely have been said of it in the Levantine section. Something seems to have gone wrong in the selection of illustrative Roman material; the coverage of architecture is derisory and of painting non-existent (some mosaics are shown, though the pages are headed "Religious Sculpture"), and one Fayum portrait appears under the heading "Funerary Sculpture". Dates are rather sparse, especially in the Egyptian section. This is something one can generally with absolute dating is generally an artificial construction which can mislead. Nevertheless, a grid of centuries and regions, showing the general relation of the different elements chronologically in the different areas, would have added greatly to the book's usefulness. So would an index.

The Benedictine breed

By John McManners

MAARTEN ULTEE:
The Abbey of St. Germain des Prés in the Seventeenth Century
210pp. Yale University Press.
0 300 02562 9

Maarten Ultee is sympathetic – perhaps too much so – towards the Benedictines of St Maur of the seventeenth century, but such generosity in a historian towards fellow historians is fitting. This was a congregation that prided itself in giving leisure and lavish support to its élite of brilliant historical scholars. Luc d'Achery, Jehan Mabillon, Thierry Ruinart, Michel Germain, Bernard de Montfaucon and Claude Martin – these are names synonymous with an immense and relentless erudition before which stoical humanity trembles. Their work centred in the abbey of St Germain-des-Prés in Paris, which was, as it were, the command post, training depot and transit camp of Benedictine learning in the seventeenth century. Except incidentally, however, Dr Ultee's study is not concerned with the Maurist contribution to learning; indeed, his book ought to have a subtitle limiting its scope: it is "a social and economic history". As such, it bears the impress of the methodology and outlook of the *Annales* school. French historians, as one might guess from the thanks to Dominique Julia and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie in the preface, and the seven tables and ten graphs listed in the contents (their austerity offset, incidentally, by eleven agreeable illustrations).

In the tradition of the *Annales*, the book begins with a demographic study of the monks of the congregation – nearly 4,000 of them – who took their vows between 1607 and 1690 (as they were moved frequently from house to house, meaningful conclusions cannot be drawn from a single monastery). Their members grew rapidly from 1620 to 1640, and less rapidly to 1676, from which date the overall figure stabilized at around the 2,000 mark up to the

mid-eighteenth century. Years of heavy mortality were swiftly followed by years of numerous professions, which suggests that there were always suitable candidates waiting to join and that the superiors were exercising a "conscious control". The available evidence does not seem adequate to make assured detailed generalizations about the geographical and social provenance of novices, but clearly more came from the North than the South, and a majority from "bourgeois" families, especially those of the up-and-coming sort.

Next comes an analysis of the economic basis of the Abbey's life. This is limited to the *mense conventuelle*, the lands, rents and dues held by the monks under their prior, as distinct from the *mense abbatale* of the absentee commendatory abbot. As the estates were, for the most part, leased to *fermiers*, the details of management, farming methods, feudal dues and peasant life are not studied. Essentially, we are shown the pattern of revenue and expenditure and the general financial policy of the foundation.

The picture is one of shrewd stewardship which doubled the value of the *mense conventuelle* between 1600 and 1720, and added half a million *livres* worth of new estates to the land register in the course of the seventeenth century. The monastery's credit was so good that it consistently borrowed money below the going rate of interest. Poor abbots of the congregation got similar favourable terms when St Germain-des-Prés covered them with its guarantee; conversely, in the untoward crises of 1653 and 1690, the other abbots rallied round to borrow money at low rates in the provinces to bail out their Parisian colleagues.

Thanks to their wealth, the monks lived well. Over 14 per cent of their budget went on food, an expenditure per head greater than the wages of an ordinary worker (the calculation, one should note, has not allowed for guests, who must have been numerous). Since alms to the poor averaged less than 1 per cent of income, the luxurious diet, the sage of sole

and cod brought by special relays from the Atlantic coast verges on scandal. Ultee points out, however, that the monastery quadrupled its almsgiving in starvation years, borrowing to do so, and on occasion remitted the debts of its peasants. And if the monks were comfortable, they were regular in the performance of the daily offices, and in fulfilling the manifold duties arising from the spiritual and temporal jurisdiction they exercised in the Fribourg St Germain (until the archbishop of Paris edged them out of most of their privileges towards the end of the century).

The general reader of this book will probably enjoy most of all the vignettes of individual monks scattered through its pages. There are a few dubious characters who fed to the manifold duties in matrimony or the Protestant ministry, or were caught and incarcerated for long years in the fortress monastery of Mont St Michel. There are others, more typical, who distinguished themselves as temporal administrators or as pastors. And above all, there is Claude Coton, the only one who left a journal; from its pages, his career and character can be traced in some detail. He did not accept the reform of St Maur, but loved and served the monastery all the same, building up for its profit, and his own, the estate of the barony of Cordoux and eight other farms, then going back to St Germain-des-Prés at the age of sixty-six to die among friends and in the odour of sanctity.

"Religious attitudes and observances", says Dr Ultee, "have always depended on general societal conditions", and he tolerantly chronicles the manifold financial and managerial manoeuvres of a great religious institution in the spirit of this generalization. Examples of cheerful and decent ambivalence between spirituality and worldliness abound in these pages. Perhaps the nicest is the observation of the monks when they decided to allow pedestrians to take a short cut through their cloisters – "to attract more people to our church and to facilitate the retail sale of wine in the monastery".

Prolonged preparations

By Norman Hampson

ROHAN BUTLER:
Choleseul
Volume I: Father and Son, 1719-1754
1,133pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £48.
0 19 822509 1

In his preface, Rohan Butler assures us briskly that "it is fashionable for lazy readers to criticize long books as self-indulgent." His own is certainly long; by page 1,078 his hero is about to begin his diplomatic career, as French ambassador to Rome. It is not mere laziness that will make potential readers ask themselves whether they are likely to learn more from this book than from four others they could read in the same time. If one can agree with the author that length does not automatically mar a book, it does not make it either. The same criteria – accuracy, insight and relevance, for example – apply to both long and short books. What changes is the kind of way in which they manifest themselves.

To some extent, historical "truth" is a question of scale. A chapter on Blum's career is almost bound to give the impression of a man who knew where he wanted to go and how to get there; ten volumes would produce a very different picture. Mr Butler himself makes a rather similar point. "One of the differences between history books and real life is that in the former the sequence of events usually leads up neatly to their lives and the events of their time, and can never quite know what the tomorrow may bring." This is an inescapable difference, in the

sense that no one who begins to write a life of Napoleon can know the fact that he was defeated at Waterloo. The leisurely biographer, however, can pretend not to know, he can refuse to impose his own foreshortening, can follow his subject up blind alleys and back down them again, pause to look at the society in which he grew up or from which he revolved, examine his taste in art or his laundry bills. Despite all this, he still needs the qualities of the author of the "brief life". Everything must be relevant, though on a different scale; information must never be put in simply because it was there and it seemed a pity to leave it out; it must all add up, even if it makes rather a large sum.

Judged in this way, Butler's *Choleseul* is always magnificent but it is not always war. He is superbly informed about everything: war, diplomacy, estate management, the courts of Europe, religion and the arts. Sometimes, as in his brilliant evocation of the Duchy of Lorraine and the world of Choleseul's childhood, this is history on the grand scale. Sometimes it is merely information that the author has acquired; we might have been spared some of the long accounts of campaigns in which little is known of Choleseul except that he was there. It is not laziness but human frailty that sends the reader running for cover when exposed to fourteen Stalvilles and twenty-six Choleseuls. If he was shown less he would see more.

The problem is not merely that one cannot take it all in. Carried away by his own enthusiasm, Butler finds it hard not to give us his own survey of Jansenism, the Enlightenment, or whatever happens to be on the agenda. This makes excellent reading in its own right, but it can

impede our understanding of what Choleseul made of it all. His comments on Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* amount to five not very revealing lines. After five pages of Butler on the same subject, one is not quite sure what Voltaire, what Choleseul and what Butler, for much of the time Butler has not got much to go on and he is in danger of unconsciously running off on to what Choleseul ought to have felt, without any guarantee that he did. When he has a big issue on his hands, such as the broken confidence that won Choleseul the friendship and protection of Mme de Pompadour, he is meticulous in setting out the evidence and leaving the reader to make up his own mind. Elsewhere he sometimes sets the scene so elaborately that one is rather talked into the assumption that it was the one Choleseul believed himself to be playing.

Butler's book will be indispensable to serious students of eighteenth-century France. It will give them all kinds of information, on all kinds of subjects, that they could not get anywhere else. As a source of information, it is a treasure-house. Often it is much more, re-creating a picture of French aristocratic society in a manner almost worthy of Saint-Simon. What it does not do, oddly enough, is leave us with a very clear impression of Choleseul.

The fourth volume (539pp. Cornell University Press, £23.00 0 8014 1336 2) in the series, edited by Stanley J. Stein, *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1790* covers the period April 1, 1781 – December 23, 1781 during which Lafayette, as commander of the American troops in the Virginia campaign, achieved outstanding success.

The Daily Times Higher Education Supplement

It will never replace the weekly but now you can

Write your own daily record of events. Just fill in the coupon below applying for a year's subscription to the THES* at our advantageous rate (even cheaper than buying a copy from your newsagent) and you will receive THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT DIARY – absolutely free! It is education supplement diary – absolutely free! It is telephone numbers relating to the world of higher education.

Those of you already receiving your THES regularly by subscription or through your newsagent can purchase a THES diary for only £1.50. Please complete coupon B and send your payment which includes postage and packing. *Offer applies to new subscribers in the U.K. only.



Please send me my free THES diary and a year's subscription to the Times Higher Education Supplement. I enclose my cheque for £22.50.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Please send this coupon with your cheque to The Times Higher Education Supplement, Room 274, P.O. Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ.

Please send me a THES diary. I enclose my cheque for £1.50

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Please send this coupon to The Times Higher Education Supplement, Room 274, P.O. Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ.

Within the starched breast

By Carol Rumens

COLLEEN McCULLOUGH:
An Indecent Obsession
314pp. Macdonald. £6.95.
0 354 048147

Belying its label, Colleen McCullough's new chaperon is in the mould of one of those improving tales for young ladies with which our grandmothers were expected to educate their souls. "Or, Sister Langtry chooses the Path of Duty" would have made an excellent sub-title, containing enough of a clue perhaps to save the reader from spending the whole volume worrying mildly about the identity of the "indecent obsession" and drawing various, consistently wrong, conclusions. In fact, McCullough scatters clues liberally throughout, though that "indecent" has served to throw us off the scent. In the last paragraph she spells it all out: "duty" is the obsession in question, though McCullough adds, in an attempt at profundity, that "duty is only another name for love". Is that why it is indecent? There seems to be no other justification in the novel's pages for this brand of heavy irony. In fact, begins and ends with the title, though a dose of it would have been beneficial to the

character of Sister Langtry, seemingly an amalgam of every screen and pulp-fiction Supernurse who has confronted the world of suffering manhood with a starched breast and soft, susceptible heart.

The action takes place in a hospital for servicemen on one of the Pacific islands at the end of the Second World War. Sister Langtry's ward, Ward X, is occupied by a small group of men who have "gone tropical" - euphemism for mental breakdown, derived from "tropical". All her patients are, we are told, "in love" in some way with Sister Langtry, a middle-class thirty-one-year-old Australian from a wealthy farming family, "very well-read in a posh girls' school way". Despite the idealism her author wishes upon her, Sister Langtry spends a great deal of her time sexually sizing up her patients. Michael, whose arrival the first section of the book laboriously charts, is of immediate interest, although "Sis", we learn, is already involved with another patient, Neil (Officer-class, like her), and has been on the verge of succumbing to the beautiful but psychopathic Luce. For love and duty it is clearly going to be a long war.

Michael is presented as a "sane" character, and therefore an alien, treated with suspicion by the others in Ward X. However he has almost killed his RSM ("his thumbs pressing down on the hyoid cartilage he had

gloried in the sheer feeling of it"), and his habit of befriending those weaker than himself has led to allegations of homosexuality. These the macho Luce is quick to seize on and maliciously use. McCullough touches on some interesting areas of ambiguity: between sane and insane, heterosexual and homosexual, lust and bloodlust, male and female attitudes to sex, but fails to explore them to the depth they merit. She is far more interested in her heroine's state of romantically polarized conflict between Neil and Michael, love and duty. Her attempts at showing us the self-questioning side of Langtry produce some feeble interior monologues which reveal little more than the authorial strings at work.

Too many of the other characters (hypochondriac Nuggie, crusty misogynist Colonel Donaldson) seem to be out of the Hospital Writer's Casebook; Luce, however, is convincing, with his veneer of swaggering machismo and his bitter social resentments. His death occurs offstage and its unpleasantness is handled with restraint. However, there is surely a missed opportunity here; McCullough might have involved the reader with the one character of tragic potential. Nor does the "whodunnit" amount to very much. So manipulative a writer is unwilling to leave her readers the space in which to form their own doubts and draw their own conclusions.

The least one might expect from a best-selling author is the ability to tell a gripping story, but McCullough's narrative is often slow, plodding and short on surprise. The argument between love and duty becomes increasingly banal after the climax of Luce's death - "her will was crooked, her duty but that never, never betrayed her. Love might, duty never did". But at least the last, postwar section with Sister Langtry permanently committed to psychiatric nursing in idealized surroundings attains a sober realism between the bouts of moralizing, and the avoidance of wedding-bells and happily-ever-after comes as a pleasant relief.

Sweet surrender

By Michael Hofmann

WINIFRED WOLFE:
Josie's Way
313pp. Plankus. £6.95.
0 86188 092 7

Winifred Wolfe's early novel, *Ask Any Girl*, was made into a successful film starring David Niven. Then, for the next twenty years, she worked on television scripts. *Josie's Way* might be billed as her return to fiction, her first love.

Not surprisingly, given Ms Wolfe's career, *Josie's Way* is one of those books whose every page breathes, "Film me, please film me." Its cover is graced with an opulent and atmospheric photograph of a still: a full-cream Swiss blonde sitting in front of her dressing-table, wearing a negligee and desultorily thumbing through her diary. The novel itself is a constant incitement to the reader to play at Do-It-Yourself Casting (there is, alas, no part for Mr Niven here). Certainly, very little would be lost in any adaptation of it for the cinema - or, better, for one of those unenviable television serials. Easily the better part of *Josie's Way* is dialogue already, with description confined to the level of stage-directions; the story has a bold and acceptable outline; the handful of indoor settings are cheap and easily distinguished; there are "challenging" parts for the two main characters, and half a dozen reasonable cameo appearances for the rest. Residual features of the book are perhaps best dispensed with: certain lapidary reflections - for instance, the closing, "the great difficulty in life did not so much arise in the choice between good and evil as in the choice between good and good" - can easily be supplied by the sated audience in front of the set, or shuffling out of the cinema.

The plot is that pathetic evergreen: the artist as shaman supplies the sexual and spiritual needs

(though especially the latter) of the unconsciously frustrated housewife. Ben (curiously also the name of the male catalyst in *The Women's Room*) Goudy is a sculptor, Josie is his human clay - though she is less tractable than previous incumbents of the role - and Ted Trask is the water and obdurate husband. Overcoming her immediate panic at Ben's intervention in her dull, merely supportive existence, Josie discovers latent interest in sculpture and spends most of the next six months in Ben's work-barn, creating busts of her two children. At the same time, her husband, who edits an independent-minded local newspaper, undergoes difficulties, in which - in the absence of his wife - he turns to his live-in mother for support. Josie loses ground in her family. There is a predictable crisis when she eventually succumbs to Ben's artistic advances and, scandalously, misses her son's birthday party. Finally, however, she makes the correct "good" choice in favour of family and against art: a decision which regulates the events of the whole novel to meaningfulness.

Written as it is to be screened and not to be read, *Josie's Way* is full of clichés. The characters speak like those in photo-romances. Occasionally, one comes across unwitting humour in the type of description that provided pop-art with its prefabricated statements on modern life. Synecdoche: "She was sitting opposite those intensely blue, medically trained eyes." Or Zeugma: "What bothered her were the artificial plants and her own growing uneasiness." There are occasional lapses of technique, as when Ms Wolfe has to appear to have been (no more) regard for her. The friendship continued after the Tennysons left Lincolnshire in 1837, and the 1840s saw Tennyson frequently visiting Sophy as Mrs Elmhirst, wife of the Rector of Shawell in Leicestershire. The disturbance in their relations which is reflected in the new poem

LITERATURE

The Tennyson Research Centre at Lincoln has recently acquired through Sotheby's the autograph manuscript of the following previously unknown poem by Tennyson. I am grateful to Lord Tennyson and to the Lincolnshire Library Services for permission to publish it.

'Yours & caetera' O how cold!
Whose designing fits have caught you?

Quarrel with a friend so old!
But whoever taught you,
It will not hold, it will not hold.

Such a note to come from you!
What has vexed you? Who has swayed you?

Quarrel with a friend so true!
But whoever made you,
It will not do, it will not do.

A letter by Tennyson never before published in its entirety (very kindly drawn to my attention by Professor C.Y. Lung of the University of Virginia and printed below by permission of Duke University Library, North Carolina) makes it clear that these touching verses must have been addressed in early 1851 to Sophy Elmhirst (née Rawnsley). Sophy Elmhirst was the daughter of Thomas Hardwicke Rawnsley, Rector of Hulton Holgate in Lincolnshire. Rawnsley had been a close and loyal friend of Tennyson's father and after 1831 acted as confidant and guardian of his friend's widow and children. Born in 1818, Sophy was known to Tennyson from her earliest years, and by the mid-1830s, while the Tennyson family were still occupying the rectory at Somersby, the poet had developed a deeply affectionate (it appears to have been no more) regard for her. The friendship continued after the Tennysons left Lincolnshire in 1837, and the 1840s saw Tennyson frequently visiting Sophy as Mrs Elmhirst, wife of the Rector of Shawell in Leicestershire.

The disturbance in their relations which is reflected in the new poem

occurred about eight months after Tennyson's marriage in June, 1850, to Emily Sellwood (at which ceremony Sophy's brother, Drummond Rawnsley, had officiated). It was at a time when Alfred and Emily Tennyson were trying to find a home, following an abortive attempt in mid-January, 1851, to settle in a house called "The Hill" in Warrington near Hordham, Unsett, as R.B. Martin has recently observed in *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart*, by the fact that on their second night in the house "part of the wall in their bedroom was blown in, so that the rain poured upon them in bed". The Tennysons moved, even though they had to pay £85 for buying out their lease. On evacuating "The Hill" they went first (on February 3) to stay with Drummond Rawnsley at his vicarage in Shipkale-on-Thames, and thence (settling out on February 18 and arriving on the 20th) to Park House near Maidstone, home of Edmund Lushington, husband of Tennyson's sister Cecilia. It was during this stay at Park House that Tennyson sent the letter which identifies for us Sophy Elmhirst as the subject of "Yours & caetera" O how cold! The letter is undated but the accompanying envelope, directed to "Mrs Elmhirst/Shawell Rectory/Lutterworth", bears Maidstone and Rugby postmarks of February 22 and 24, 1851, respectively.

My dear Sophy,
Emily fell down a step at Reigate (on the journey from Shipkale to Park House) and sprained her ankle and has ever since suffered a good deal of pain. I have had in other ways a great deal of trouble and perplexity and am yet (tho' paying £8 a year for a house) without a house to live in. If she were not one of the sweetest and justest natures in the world I

A Tennyson discovery

By Aidan Day

should be almost at my wit's end (as the saying is) but she bears with me and with her troubles and mine. I feel hurt at the letter you have written me. You ought to have known me better than to have accused me of expressing myself as annoyed at your invitation. I was really amazed at your accusation and took some pains to inquire what you could mean. At last I find out that Emily said to Kate (Catherine, wife of Drummond Rawnsley) that I was annoyed that I could not come or annoyed that you wouldn't believe I couldn't. Is being annoyed that I could not come or being annoyed that you wouldn't believe me the same thing as being annoyed that I was asked? Is it not just the contrary? Sophy, Sophy how could you? Under whose influences are you acting to misinterpret so unhappily? I had really fancied that you did know a little more of me and that I am not the weathercock of change you would make me. Really your note is not kind and to sign yourself "Yours & c" makes it worse. I do not love unkind things to be thought said or done, and least of all did I expect it of you. Pray, reconsider, and see if you are not the party in fault: as for me I am (as I have always been)

Yours not
&c &c &c
but
affectionately
A.

Emily Tennyson added a note of her own on the inside of the envelope to the letter:

My dear Sophy
I told Katy that he was amazed you did not take him at his word that he could not come but repeated the invitation immediately, as

if not believing him that he could not.

Yours affectionately
Emily Tennyson

Sophy's hurtful letter does not appear to have survived. Nor has it been possible to establish the exact nature of her invitation. But that she repeated it seems to have led to a chain of reactions that put her, in Tennyson's eyes at least, in the reverse of the position she had occupied when, some fifteen or so years earlier, she had fallen out with him at a county ball in Spishly in Lincolnshire, an occasion Tennyson recorded in his sonnet "To thee, with whom my best affections dwell".

The constancies of feeling between the two friends were not to be lastingly disrupted through a misunderstanding over an invitation. In June, 1871, in a letter printed by Illingham Tennyson in his *Memoir of his father*, Tennyson wrote to Sophy ex-

pressing his sympathy over the death of her son:

... I thought of writing at the moment when I first heard of your great affliction, but somehow I myself have always felt that letters of condolence, when the grief is yet raw and painful, are like vain voices in the ears of the deaf, not heard or only half heard. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and a stranger meddeth not therewith, though I am not a stranger indeed, but your old friend from your childhood.

The poem, along with a copy of William Trollope's *Penultima Græca* (1825) extensively annotated by Tennyson in his youth, was bought at a Sotheby's sale on July 27, 1981. Further details on the manuscript, together with an account of Tennyson's copy of the *Penultima*, will appear in a future issue of the *Tennyson Research Bulletin*.

Atomically perceptive

By John Batchelor

C. H. SALTER:
Good Little Thomas Hardy
200pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 29387 8

In the final chapter of *Good Little Thomas Hardy*, C. H. Salter brings somewhat bleakly to an end what he regards as "The Good" in Hardy. Perhaps I may adopt his own uncompromising sense of categories: "The Good" in Salter's book is to be found in his brisk but not (on the whole) unjust handling of other scholars, his knowledge of Hardy's work and his ability to present his findings in an organized way. He is right to say that the chronological development of a "great web" perceived in Hardy's novels by some critics is an illusion - early works like *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far from the Madding Crowd* are as densely written as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as he points out - and it is true that Hardy is inaccurate about the world he lives in (unfair to late Victorian Oxford in *Jude the Obscure*, for instance) and awkward in ways which cannot be satisfactorily explained by saying that he was primarily a folk-artist, poet or mythmaker. Salter's third chapter, "Ideas", is particularly crisp and persuasive. He argues here that Hardy owes very little to Darwin (Hardy "never claimed to have read *The Origin of Species*"), Comte, Mill or Arnold, that he exaggerated his own intellectual debt to Leslie Stephen and that the most interesting aspect of Hardy's relationship with Stephen is their common enthusiasm for the eighteenth century.

It may well be the case that Hardy is overdue for devaluation, that too many claims have been made for his modernity, intellectual receptiveness and literary cohesion. But the tone of this book is oddly bad-tempered, as though the experience of reading Hardy's complete works and a large number of critical studies has produced in Mr Salter a state of irritation which could be discharged only by the literary equivalent of a blast with a machine-gun. The dust-jacket alleges that the author has "genuine love, knowledge and understanding of the real Hardy". I am willing to take the "love" on trust; but there is really no evidence of it in Salter's text. He believes that the repetitiousness in Hardy, which is undeniable, denotes "lack of invention"; but in saying this he seriously underestimates Hardy's artistry. Some of the details are decidedly nagging; for instance, Salter dislikes the repetition of those peculiar Hardy words, "recount", "intramural", and so on. "Recount" is certainly used in a special sense, but the contexts make the sense clear and delicate: Dick Dewy hopes for a "recount" with Fanny Day and carefully cleans his shoes in preparation for it; the

Certainly Hardy likes to work and rework his material, and inevitably repetitions occur: Salter cites features of natural description, the connection between death and marriage, and the repetition of "handholding and kissing" in "seven novels, in five of which the motif is prominent". But there is no rule which lays down that great writers are forbidden to repeat themselves. Throughout this book there is an implied comparison with George Eliot, culminating in two pages in which Salter argues that Hardy systematically pillaged George Eliot for material. I don't think he does, and in any case surely George Eliot herself is repetitious; for example, there is the recurring pattern of dark girl/blonde girl, the altruist/egotist balance, the persistent "scientific" images, the connections between flowing water and romantic passion in *The Mill on the Floss* and *Middlemarch*.

In his last full-sentence Salter finds virtue in Hardy's art: it is in "atomic perceptions" that we find the "essential Hardy". But to make "atomic perceptions" is the activity of the academic literary critic; what the novelist does is to create imagined worlds and populate them with invented persons. Hardy's great novels must be read as wholes. Much of Salter's book seems beside the point if one goes straight from it to re-read *Tess* and to note in that novel the marvellously intricate and consistent use of the movements of the sun, the tactfully placed but irresistible pattern of colour imagery, the mastery with which the different kinds of landscape are established and contrasted with one another.

In the course of his gleeful attacks on other Hardy critics some of the mud that gets slung is quite wrongly allowed to splatter Hardy himself. Mr Salter thinks that "the reader's confused reading of his work by (at the same time) equating novel-writing with story-telling and saying he is really a poet and not a novelist" and then quotes Hardy's letter in which he says "I wish merely to be considered a good hand at a serial". I had thought that Robert Gittings's biography had finally put to rest the idea that this letter shows that Hardy is "not serious" about his novel-writing. Gittings remarks that "nothing in Hardy's life has been more misinterpreted than this last sentence" that it should be "taken as a gambit in his temporary manoeuvres with [Leslie] Stephen" (the editor of *Corinth*) who had just published *Far from the Madding Crowd* and that it tells us nothing about his attitude to his art.

A feline revenge

By David Profumo

LEE JORDAN:
Cat's Eyes
170pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £5.95.
0 340 27244 9

Lee Jordan sounds like a character from *Dallas*, but in fact "the pseudonym of an experienced husband-and-wife writing team". Precisely how their respective contributions were combined it would be interesting to know; certainly their joint experience in a range of writing skills is evident, for *Cat's Eyes* is a very efficiently woven novel of suspense and mystery, threaded carefully with false clues and circumstantial details. The story is ingenious without becoming baffling or preposterous.

Rachel Chater is a Californian writer living in an area of rural Sussex which appears to be teeming with feral cats and scavenging dogs. Her novelist husband, Bill, is called away to Hollywood on a script-writing assignment soon after she has returned from hospital, following a car accident in which she injured her leg while swerving to avoid a large cat in the lane. Their lascivious handyman, Charlie Leech, was killed in the accident, and Rachel is haunted by subsequent nightmares in which she imagines his face at her window; her distress is hardly assuaged by Charlie's widow, who not only holds Rachel responsible for his death, but accuses her of sleeping with him into the bargain.

Her wretched hours are further disturbed by increasingly frequent visitations from the furtive feline, who appears to be intent on penetrating her home by night, and in her agitated state Rachel begins to believe that it is a male, some kind of revenge for playing its leg crippled in the accident. To make matters worse, a number of unpleasant and unexplained events cause her to suspect that her absent husband may be engineering her despair - her dog is poisoned, her baby daughter is attacked, and she receives alarming telephone calls - and there is only one neighbour to whom she can turn for support. Alice Webb is a battle-scarred former vet who tries to reassure her that there is nothing sinister about the elusive cat, but eventually abandons state concerns and her husband, and returns to her own life. But the cat is unappeased.

As books of this type should, *Cat's Eyes* keeps the reader speculating throughout about the conclusion to the plot, but the authors sometimes steer with a heavy hand. At every stage of the narrative the reader's imaginative participation is restricted by the comprehensive detail in which every action, however small, is described: while this has the merit of ensuring that no-one loses his way, it can also result in passages of information on a number of salient but nevertheless unenthralling topics such as the causes of cat deaths, the sleeping posture of dogs, the art of making bedgown wines, and a minor treatise on the cerebellum of cats. The background research which this implies is laudable, but such busy erudition tends to interrupt the narrative, and is connected to another irritating tendency that might be termed the Dossier Effect: a new character is no sooner introduced than we are treated to an instant summary of his life history, a curriculum vitae which establishes his background and credentials for the rest of the book. It is sometimes more interesting to discover things as we go along. For example, the deviously inquisitive Celia James chats thus to Rachel: "Tell me about yourself, Rachel - and your husband", an invitation which leads to a rapid survey of Rachel's life and career in America, until, drained of biographical detail, she admits, "I'm talking too much."

Where this technique of pressing information on the reader is successful, though, is in the treatment of the cat itself. By punctuating the book with glimpses of the beast moving as a free agent, the claustrophobic fearfulness of Rachel's existence is contrasted with its wit and grace, and the way she senses that she is under siege from a ruthless and calculating intelligence is reinforced by the details of the cat's bloodthirsty past.

Maureen Brady's first novel, *Give Me Your Good Day* (161pp. The Women's Press. Paperback. £2.95. 0 7043 3874 2), concerns the troubled childhood and adult life of Francis Kelly, who as a girl is the "silent witness to violent events", and who, as a woman "working towards being alone through choices", finds that "her" memory of "those events" stuck in the painful perceptions of childhood, suddenly shifts. Adrienne Rich writes: "Violence, these are the words female connections; these are the words of a woman's eye, largely unavailable to us in fiction." The integrity of Brady's writing never falters.

The female melting pot

By Virginia Llewellyn Smith

ANGELA CARTER, MURIEL CERF and others:
Sex and Sensibility
Stories by Contemporary Women
Writers from nine countries
248pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £6.95.
0 283 98670 0

Writing Women
19 Osborne Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne NE2 2 AH
Subscription: £3.25 for 3 issues per year.

There are various ways of helping women writers to see themselves in print and to be read in the context of feminism - two aims which any book that calls itself a "publishing project" is likely to regard as interconnected. The book in question has chosen one way, that of publishing established women writers. With the idea of reflecting "the experience of women in the emancipation process", eight European firms and one in the US have produced, and published simultaneously, a cosmopolitan anthology of stories written by women in the last decade. The jacket, presumably, is the same for each edition, with the contributors' photographs ranged on the back like finalists in an intellectual Miss World contest (is there not a whiff of the male in this cosmopolitanism?). But have the other publishers, called the book anything as crass as *Sex and Sensibility*? We need this taxonomy of a title proposed over our experience to keep us at the same time warm and defiant. Or is it meant to imply, echoing Jane Austen's antithesis, that sex is one thing and sensibility quite another?

Certainly this book is not about having a good time in bed with men. A recurrent theme is that women, finding a variety of their needs not satisfied by men, turn to other

women for relationships in which companionship and rather vague notions of freedom are more important than sex itself. In attempts to express the age-old truth that there's more to life than men, the melting-pot of female wisdom gets a thorough stirring, throwing up heartening chunks during a night of lovemaking when she's giving herself to a man."

But the writing is not all like this, and the stories differ on several levels of technique and approach. Muriel Cerf's surrealistic, verbally adept tale is a brilliant beauty who abandons her rich fiancé for a love-affair with a one-armed bandit is worlds away from Brita Arnsdottir's wry account of a Stockholm secret-ary whose blind date fails to come up to her baldly explicit requirements ("a man who can maintain sexual intercourse for longer than two minutes, and who has a minimum of independent thoughts in his skull"). Shulamith Hareven, in "Loneliness", writes simply and warmly about a well-heeled Jerusalem housewife. Gail Godwin in "Childhood Friends" lays bare similarities in the subtextual scene, in the cruel, sophisticated veils of Alison Lurie, but her device of presenting the narrative as "Notes for a story" is pretentious and irritating, except where it enables her to avoid some longuissims inherent in the subject-matter ("Have Catherine relate, in detail, some of her cataclysmic experience with lovers"). It is hard to avoid an overall impression that the stories were selected with some stereotyped notion of the progressive woman's interests in mind; and that some contributions may not represent their authors' best work.

Children appear as incidental props in several of the stories, but nobody writes about a mother's feelings for her children, though these feelings are a major preoccupation of

a great many women, emancipated or not. Sigrd Brunk's "Linda" concerns the conflict between a woman's vision of herself as a mother, and her career persona, which is also a common preoccupation, but not the same one, and Hauntes Melinkens' "My Mother's Name", which purports to be a child's view of her mother (warm, mature and caring) would lose nothing of its emotional or artistic impact by being preb'd on Jackie's teenage problem page.

The best piece is Angela Carter's patchy, inconsequential "The Quilt Maker", though perhaps I am subconsciously prejudiced in favour of the home team (reverberations of Miss World again). None of the authors seems to have lost much in translation, except perhaps Cerf (and I expect "your eyes of a woods at dawn" sounds better in Catalan).

A second way to promote women's writing is to offer all aspirants a place in which to do it and a sympathetic female editorship. This is what a new journal, *Writing Women*, sets out to do. Its first issue is lively with a mixed bag, featuring some well-known names (Elaine Feinstein, Lorna Tracy) and some who will never be well known. It includes a critique of *The Portrait of a Lady* by Diana Collecott, whose approach to her subject is that of a social worker compiling case-notes; prove that Henry James should never have been given charge of Isabel Archer. Though I think such criticism wildly misguided, I would rather see grim Collecott scolding grim, sexually aggressive Caspar Goodwood than turn back a few pages and be faced with banalish primly curtailing, an entry in Joan Michelson's "Journal of a Frequenting (1979)": fifteen pages of four hour session of vomiting and dry retching. . . . Nose bleed, vaginal discharge: viscous white" and the like. It may possibly be liberating to write this, but it is boring to read it.

Manufacturing a movement

By Glen Cavallero

STEPHEN PRICKETT (Editor):
The Romantics
267pp. Methuen. £9.50 (paperback, £4.95).
0 416 72012 0

These essays form part of the "Context of English Literature" series. The authors are all members of the University of Sussex; their aim is to present the Romantic poets "as characterising a distinctive age, or even a movement". But connections and influences are easier to establish than the case for studying the major Romantics as part of a literary or even social movement.

Stephen Prickett's two essays, especially that on "The Religious Context", are more directly informative. The connections he makes between Romanticism and the Evangelical Revival are persuasive and, on occasion, plithily expressed: he refers to Wordsworth's line "fostered alike by beauty and by fear" as a "secularized epigraph to the whole growth of Methodism". It is, however, surely going too far to suggest, as he does, that the Bible, rather than Classical literature, was the main inspiration of the Romantic poets. This may be true of Coleridge, Blake and Wordsworth, in whom the author is evidently most interested; but it hardly applies to Scott or Shelley, Byron or Keats, all of whom are currently Revivalist. But his elevation of Newman to a place among the Romantics shows the relevance of Catholic sacramentalism to Romantic thought, as do the comments on *The Grammar of Assent*, which relate Newman's "illative sense" to Coleridge's theory of the primary imagination. This essay could serve as a preface to Prickett's valuable *Romanticism and Religion* (1976).

His second essay, on "Romantic Literature", is highly selective. Moreover, enlightening generalizations are peppered with small inaccuracies, for instance the suggestion that the term "Waverley novels" describes only Scott's earlier fiction; Students new to the period have little help, then, piece such ev-

dence together, nor do stylistic graces ease their way. In this respect Marcia Pointon's essay on "Romanticism in English Art" is more systematic; but her conclusion that "Romanticism in the visual arts has no overriding single characteristic", while incontrovertible as she presents it, seems to negate the premises on which the collection as a whole is based. Whereas she and Colin Brooks both demonstrate the variety and changeableness of the period 1770-1830, none of them substantiates the case for studying the major Romantics as part of a literary or even social movement.

Stephen Prickett's two essays, especially that on "The Religious Context", are more directly informative. The connections he makes between Romanticism and the Evangelical Revival are persuasive and, on occasion, plithily expressed: he refers to Wordsworth's line "fostered alike by beauty and by fear" as a "secularized epigraph to the whole growth of Methodism". It is, however, surely going too far to suggest, as he does, that the Bible, rather than Classical literature, was the main inspiration of the Romantic poets. This may be true of Coleridge, Blake and Wordsworth, in whom the author is evidently most interested; but it hardly applies to Scott or Shelley, Byron or Keats, all of whom are currently Revivalist. But his elevation of Newman to a place among the Romantics shows the relevance of Catholic sacramentalism to Romantic thought, as do the comments on *The Grammar of Assent*, which relate Newman's "illative sense" to Coleridge's theory of the primary imagination. This essay could serve as a preface to Prickett's valuable *Romanticism and Religion* (1976).

His second essay, on "Romantic Literature", is highly selective. Moreover, enlightening generalizations are peppered with small inaccuracies, for instance the suggestion that the term "Waverley novels" describes only Scott's earlier fiction; Students new to the period have little help, then, piece such ev-

or with too easy collocations, such as that of *The Castle of Otranto* with *Valhalla*, which does disservice to Bedford's mock-serious irony. But Prickett puts his finger on the source of Romanticism's decline. "Like all his contemporaries, including Peacock, Shelley's defence of poetry was achieved primarily by a discussion of the poet, not of poetry." However ungrammatically, the point is well made.

Among other things the essay contains a ninefold definition of the word "Nature" - very handy to have. T. J. Diffey's "The Roots of the Imagination" traces the emergence of romantic philosophy through the eighteenth century, and is especially helpful in disentangling the several senses of the word "imagination" as used by Coleridge, Blake and Wordsworth. His analysis of Blake's language by comparison with that of a modern guidebook shows an awareness of his reader's experience and concerns. The effect is stimulating.

This book may be recommended less to students than as a refresher course for their teachers, though the Diffey and the first Prickett essays could prove very useful for relative beginners. The effect of the collection as a whole is to prompt the recollection that it is the romantic poets' difference from their age and not their contemporaneity which makes it still vital to attend to what they wrote.

The December 1981 volume of *The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, Sixth Series, Volume 3, Number 4 (Oxford University Press. Annual subscription £18. \$44 US) contains an article by Aidan Day on "The Lincoln Manuscript: Fragment of Tennyson's 'The Poem of Arthur'". Other articles in this issue are Archbishop William King's Library Catalogue by Robert S. Matteson, "How Many Copies of *Tina Andronicus* Q3 are Extant?" by G. Harold Metz and "Changes in the 1823 Edition of *Frankenstein*" by B. Murray.

